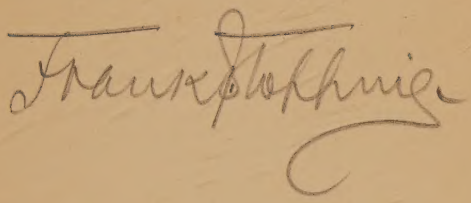
AN
OLD
BEAU
John Seymour Wood



"Leaning against His Shoulder Sat a Fair Young Girl, Sound Asleep." *Page* 301.

AN OLD BEAU

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

JOHN SEYMOUR WOOD

AUTHOR OF "GRAMERCY PARK," "A DAUGHTER OF VENICE," ETC.

NEW YORK

CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE

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THE MERSHON COMPANY PRESS,
RAHWAY, N. J.

To L. M.

THESE STORIES ARE LOVINGLY DEDICATED.

NOTE.

The first story of this volume appeared in Scribner's Magazine, February, 1891. The second story appeared in the same magazine, August, 1890. "Poor Cousin Parker" and "How Amasa Snow Got on His Feet" appeared in Harper's Weekly in 1889. The rest are new. I wish to thank the Messrs. Scribner and Harper for their permission to reprint the stories owned by them.

J. S. W.

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THE STORY OF AN OLD BEAU.

I.

MR. PERCY THORNDYKE had been, for many years, a well-known figure at the Club. He made it his daily habit, when in town, to leave his business at about three o'clock, and spend the remaining hours of the afternoon sitting with his friends in one of the broad windows which looked upon Fifth Avenue. He had an exquisite and highly cultivated eye for female beauty, and it was conceded that the windows of the Club afforded members an unusually favorable opportunity for observing the pretty girls. It almost seemed, sometimes, as if the pretty girls went out of their way to exhibit their clear complexions, their frank,

bright eyes, their charming costumes, their slender figures before the Club windows. Thorndyke, who had been, in his day, a society "swell," was still frequently able to give a *débutante* a decided vogue by noticing her, and praising her "points." He was careful to attend the Delmonico balls, and he had long been accustomed to see his name in the standing list of fashionable attendants at entertainments in the city and at Newport. He kept in his capital memory the names and pedigrees of the "buds" with the same studious care he gave to the yearling fillies. The younger men at the Club often found him a valuable *confidant*, in consequence. He knew the rich, brilliant, and childish society in which he moved as no other man—except, perhaps, the "great" McWard—knew it. In the days when Saratoga and Long Branch were still fashionable, he had been a distinguished leader of the German. It had hardly

been ten years since he had opened the Charity ball, an affair which he regretfully said was now given over to "everybody." He retained several accomplishments of the beau of twenty-five or thirty years ago. He played billiards, as well as the piano, capitally; he was still a most graceful dancer; he was fond of a rakish trotter; he quoted Byron with inconceivable aptness; and he had many little habits—such as universally smoking his cigar in an elaborate meerschaum holder, and wearing diamond jewelry—habits which were retained by him in his later years much in the same way the wig is retained on the English bench. On the other hand, he despised the modern craze for athletics. He preferred the standard hero of his youth—the tall, pale, intellectual young man, with sad eyes, broad shoulders, narrow hips, and nerves of steel—the muscles of the giant with the delicate hands of a woman! He longed to personify this

heroic personage, and his fatness and rotundity were among the bitterest griefs of his later years. He was still careful about his clothes, and yielded gracefully to the demands of "good form," that they should be purchased chiefly in Bond Street. He was really intensely American—he secretly despised the kind of young man who turns up his trousers because it is raining in London—but he preferred to be in style, and if it led him to England, it did not much matter. A great many of the elder set at the Club complained that Thorndyke dressed too "young." It usually became necessary to imitate him, and they wished that he was more given to compromises. It was he, they said, who first made the short, tailless dress-coat possible for men of his years; and it was he who unequivocally adopted the Gordon sash and flannel shirt for summer. It was doubted whether Thorndyke ever *would* grow old; he was capable of very

youthful follies still; he had often been convicted by amused mammas of making foolish, boyish love to the pretty young "buds!" Where most men would have given themselves to serious pursuits, he labored for months, in secret, and finally brought forth a new cocktail, which he was much too modest to allow to be named for him; he dubbed it, on mature reflection, the "Byron," after his favorite and only poet. The cocktail at once achieved a success. It became very popular at the Club, and for a year Thorndyke was prevailed upon to devote his spare time to the concoction of a "long" drink which would be superior, even, to the chaste simplicity of the "Remsen Cooler." It may be said that he experimented, at some personal inconvenience to himself, without much success. He complained that he had not the pure, unadulterated liquors of his youth at hand—just as he habitually deplored the modern songsters, and went

back to praise the old Academy and the *divas* of long ago.

He was getting quite bald of late, and he was careful to part the thin crisp of gray hair over his forehead accurately in the middle. His mustache was his chief glory; it was long and silken, and had the most graceful curves, and it had as yet given no sign of decadence. His complexion was rubicund, his blue eyes a little disposed to bulge; his figure was round and inclined to a buoyant *embonpoint*. It told a story of a thousand good dinners—in a city that has at last vanquished the cookery of Paris. Time had written (to misquote his favorite poet) no wrinkles on his ruby brow. His face had all the smooth flexibility of an infant's. When he gave way, occasionally, to a smile, the entire face gave one a momentary sensation of a "sunburst"—so frequent in colonial decoration.

Even down to the little fashionable

touch—the purple bachelor's-button in the lapel of his well-fitting cutaway—in spite of his roundness and avoirdupois, he was always in such admirable good form that it would have made one ridiculous to have laughed at him. For a man of his years he was decidedly *chic*. He was also easy-going, modest of his accomplishments, and yet full of a sensitive and abnormal pride—a heroic sense of what was to be expected of him, derived, partly from his fondness for romantic reading, and partly from his long leadership in the ballroom. He loved to be admired by the women—to be distinguished. Women as a rule vexed him greatly—they petted him. It was only the very young ones who worshiped; and to the young ones the old beau devoted himself, and made his boyish avowals.

He had inherited a considerable fortune from his father, who had lived to see his son successfully launched in his own

business—wholesale dry goods. But in some way there had come a failure a few years after the old gentleman's death, and Thorndyke had taken the remnants of his sister's and his own fortune from dry goods into Wall Street. Here, with the aid of a few good friends, he had succeeded for a while fairly well. He was able in time to invest fifty thousand dollars as his sister's share in his speculations, and in addition to settle upon her an annuity which he paid from his own income. It was a matter of pride with him to make her all the return he could for the loss of the family fortune. In fact, he never quite got over the unkind reproaches of Georgianna at the time of the failure—a failure which, he considered, was not due to his own mismanagement but to an unfortunate temporary lull in the price of calicoes. Georgianna, for her part, had never quite forgiven him.

She was a woman with a tongue, and after the death of her dissolute husband she seemed to have no one on whom to apply it, legitimately, except her amiable brother. She seemed never weary of telling him that she ought to have been the boy, and he the girl of the family. This trifling bit of persiflage appeared to worry him dreadfully. He felt that Georgianna would never come to abandon her attitude of disapproval; but he admired his still handsome sister very much, and devoted himself to her and her daughter's interests. Georgianna had at one time been a favorite toast among the *jeunesse dorée* who gathered in Delmonico's café on Fourteenth Street. She had danced with the Russian Grand Duke Alexis on his visit in '66. She had at one time the New York world at her feet, and she had selected a handsome, but unreliable youth as a husband, who turned out eventfully to be a drunkard.

It was, perhaps, her brother's advocacy of this marriage, which proved so unfortunate, that laid the foundation of her final disrespect. She very soon ceased to remember that she had been wildly in love with her good-looking Willy Batterson. Thorndyke had been loyal to her then, however, and he was loyal to her now. He had long since ceased to care particularly what Georgianna said, or, if he felt grieved, he forgave for Ethel's sake. Ethel had grown up to be even more beautiful than he remembered her mother. When he insisted upon this to some of his old club cronies they laughed, and referred him to the well-known principle—that a brother never fully appreciates his sister's good looks. Colonel Bullock, now a wealthy operator, and who recalled Mrs. Batterson in the old days very well, told him frankly he was talking nonsense. "My dear boy," said the colonel, one evening at the club, after

dinner, "your sister was the handsomest, most fascinating girl that ever lived—all of us older fellows are agreed on that point. During the war Georgie Thorndyke always presided at the Sanitary Fairs—over the flower tables—and that ought to settle it."

And Colonel Bullock's hand trembled with agitation as he raised a kummel and ice to his lips, amid a profound silence, and an exchange of amused glances. It was well understood that, since the death of his wife, a few years before, the colonel had been very attentive in a certain direction.

II.

THORNDYKE had never experimented in marriage as his sister had done. After his first failure in dry goods, he began nervously to share his sister's distrust in himself. His success in Wall Street served to steady him, but it gave him no

confidence. Within a few years he had met with new reverses, which had cramped him a good deal. He had not allowed his losses to have any effect upon his sister's annuity. They had compelled him, however, to give up a very pretty suite of apartments on the Avenue, where his little breakfasts had been famous among a select circle for years. They had compelled him also to give up his excellent valet and live as close to the wind as his tastes and habits would permit. He said to himself that it mattered little where he slept—that his club was his essential *milieu*. We may take the reader into our confidence sufficiently to state that Thorndyke's circumstances had grown so narrow, within a year, that he was actually compelled to lodge, in secret, in a cheap boarding house on an unfashionable street. He never spoke of his affairs to anyone. To many of his club friends he gave the

impression of never being long absent from his favorite corner in the smoking room. His sister had but a vague suspicion as to his narrowed circumstances. He explained the absence of Pierre, his valet, as due to a prolonged visit to his beloved Paris. He referred to his removal from the Avenue to the unpleasant encroachment of a London haberdasher. As yet he had given no sign of his decaying circumstances in the appearance of his clothes. Georgianna, as long as she duly received her annuity, could think and talk about him as she liked.

But of late, things were going from bad to worse. The market had long been very dull, and he was consciously sinking deeper and deeper in the mire of debt. His friends noticed how silent, how remote he had become. He came in and left the Club restlessly, nodding to some and cutting others inadvertently. He declined several breakfasts, fearful of

the obligation of returning them; he gave up his bottle of wine at dinner; his easy joviality disappeared; he seldom laughed; little blue circles lined the upper rim of his fat cheeks. It began to be whispered that "Thorny" was playing in hard luck. It is never the thing at the Club to pry, and his most intimate friend would never have felt privileged to speak to him of his affairs, unbidden. This is the way in clubs, where men have no business to be pitiful, and no desire to be merciful. The Club is after all but a miniature of the world, where men come and go, rise or disappear, and the billiards, and little drinks, and dinners go on forever.

He sat one afternoon, late in May, in his sister's pretty apartment, waiting until she made her appearance. He twirled his narrow-rimmed, stylish little derby in his fat fingers, and wondered what Georgianna would say; for he had

made up his mind to tell her that the end had come, and he could keep up the fight no longer. He planned to make her aware that her annuity would still be regularly paid by his bankers, but that he himself would be obliged to disappear. He had, at the time, a vague notion of going to San Francisco, and of entering the banking house of an old friend who resided there. He restlessly arose, and, as was his wont, set some of the *bric-à-brac* in order on a little Venetian table near him. In a silver tray he counted half a dozen of Colonel Bullock's cards, and a tremulous smile illumined his face a moment. He walked across the room, and glanced out of the window upon the roofs below. A fine mass of cumulus clouds were sailing from the west in, otherwise, the clearest of blue skies. The bright bit of cloudscape, with here and there a shining steeple to remind him that he was not actually

in cloudland, gave him a momentary feeling of irresolution. "Things will change," he said, half aloud—"I may make a turn this week in C. K. & K. C. —I'll defer telling Georgianna a few days —perhaps I never need confess—who knows?"

Everything was very pretty and expensive in the apartment. There were some good paintings, one or two fair bronzes; some costly silken hangings and portières. There were certain things, his sister said, which, no matter how poor one was, one *must* have. She dressed herself and her daughter very well—she gave excellent little dinners—she had indeed a charming *ménage* on her seventh story, and many rich and clever people cultivated her and Ethel, and praised her wit, her gayety. Thorndyke wondered how she lived so well on her income. She drove in the park two or three times a week in a stylish little

cart which no one ever recognized as belonging to Smith & Robinson, the liverymen. She managed to have a box at the opera part of the season—but this, to be sure, was generally given her. When Ethel, the preceding spring, gave signs of fatigue from her small dances and her lunches—*and* overwork at school, —she whisked her off to Lakewood for a week, where she indulged in the most expensive suite in the hotel. She was continually planning little trips for Ethel's benefit. Sometimes she reminded her brother of a young married friend who was passionately fond of the circus, and who had taken his little boy eight times to Barnum's in as many days. He fancied that Ethel did not wish so much done for her. She seemed to him at times so different, so remote from her handsome mamma.

Presently he heard Georgianna's high-keyed, rich voice coming from an inner

room. It was raised with an angry intonation. She was engaged in berating a neglectful servant. He gave a start and stood up. "No," he said, "I will not tell her to-day; she is in one of her indignant moods." When his sister entered he was still standing, and he gave a step forward and pressed her finger-tips between his fat, pudgy, gloved hands. She seemed to be borne into the room on a fresh breeze. She had a good deal of color, very white teeth, a laughing mouth, flashing dark eyes, a full, pretty figure—Georgianna was still, at forty, very handsome.

"Percy!" she cried laughingly, in the same loud, strident key she had used upon the delinquent servant, "I'm so glad you happened to call; I need some money—not much—don't make such a face—send me a hundred dollars to-morrow."

"Oh, very well," he replied carelessly,

glancing around the room. He was inwardly wondering from whom he should borrow it.

"I need it—I need it for Ethel; the poor child has been invited to the N——'s dancing class—the last of the season. It will be very swell, and it will be the last before Ethel comes out, you know. I want her to have a new dress. Besides, I shall need some money for myself. In the first place I intend to set up a buttons——"

He said nothing, but there was in his attitude something which gave her the impression of a remonstrance.

"I have denied myself *every* comfort," she cried, "and I am going to try and live more decently in future. Heaven only knows how economical we are, and you know *why*, Percy."

"Oh, I think a buttons would be a very good thing," he said, rather indifferently. He tried to be deferential.

"Don't you *see*," she burst out, in the tone he dreaded, "I do it all for Ethel? Do you think that, after all I have gone through, *I* care to be in the world—to go to receptions, teas, dinners—to wear myself out and bore myself to death with stupid people? Don't you know that I *hate* Wagner, and yet I *will* go to the opera, where Ethel can be seen? Do you imagine that *I* care for these things? Is it for *my* pleasure? *I* never know what pleasure is; and *you* go from this little household, where we are scrimping and saving—where?—*to your club!*"

Here Thorndyke winced a little.

"I hardly think Ethel will require any advertising," he said at length, ignoring her jibes at his weakness. "For that reason I have always opposed sending her to London for the season. I hate the Prince of Wales's 'favorable notice,' and all that sort of thing—Ethel is very much of a lady."

He thought he detected a milder glance, a kinder note in his sister's voice.

"You came out very early," he said. "You were barely seventeen——"

"Mercy! *those* days?" she laughed gayly. "How provincial everything was. It was like living in Rochester or Buffalo —it was even worse than Chicago! We hardly knew what's what! I came out as soon as I could jump into a long dress. During the war, too, everything was in confusion. I went straight from boarding school to my first grand ball. It was just before the Seventh left, and I remember I was engaged to two men at once when they marched down Broadway, and set out to take Richmond, and both were killed afterward—I wore mourning for six months—and the excitement—and the sanitary fairs——"

"Colonel Bullock was speaking of them the other night," he said, watching her face.

"*He* went to the war," she said shortly, and he felt the edge of her disdainful smile.

"Where is Ethel?" he asked quietly.

"She has gone to her riding school—her last lesson this season."

"I believe I will go and bring her home."

"Oh, the maid is with her, of course—there is no need, Percy."

He took up his hat and cane.

"We can't be too careful with Ethel," he said gravely.

"With our other foreign importations we are bringing over the foolish custom of not letting girls go about alone," said his sister. "*I* never even took my maid with *me*—years ago."

"We were very unsophisticated Americans in those days, I fear," he laughed. "I think I will go and fetch her home in a cab."

He turned to go. Yet Georgianna

seemed so mild—should he not seize the opportunity of telling her his situation, and having it over with? It would give his visit a better point.

She could not help noticing his agitation. "You are unusually flushed, Percy," she said. "Have you—have you been 'lushing it' lately, at the Club?"

It was a cruel question, and it made him anxious to escape before he would again be tempted with a desire to confide in Georgianna. But she had no intention, probably, of being cruel.

"Percy, you are really not well," she said, as she followed him out. "You had better stay and lie down."

"Oh, it's my old malaria, that's all," he said, trying to speak in a cheerful tone.

"*It's the Club!*" he heard her say, half under her breath. For some reason the elevator did not respond, and he felt that he must stand and hear what his sister had to say without flinching.

"We are getting on in life, Percy. It seems to me—I have long thought of it—you should live here with us—you should protect us——"

"Well?" he said dubiously.

"It would be better for you—for Ethel. But there is one thing——"

"Oh, I understand—the Club," he said shortly, over his shoulder.

"Yes, I want you—I ask you to give it up."

"Well, I will think of it."

"It is such a foolish expense for you," she went on, in her high, metallic key, "and—you ought to be thinking of serious things. If you came and lived with us, I should expect you to give it up, Percy."

The elevator rose to the floor.

"And you won't forget about the——" she asked.

"I'll try and send it this evening."

And with that the swift elevator de-

scended with him to the level of the street. Thorndyke felt that he had been a moral coward.

III.

He made his way out on the Avenue, and hailed a passing hansom. He felt that the crisis had arrived. He was certain that C. K. & K. C. was going lower. He felt sure that he had but one course to pursue. He had a restless anxiety to see and talk with Ethel alone, away from her mother. He longed for a little sympathy. It was so terrible carrying his burdens alone. Besides his mental worries, he actually felt physically weak and miserable. He was in no condition to stand the shock of throwing New York over and beginning life anew in the West. That morning, for the first time in many years, he had been unable to eat his breakfast.

He thought of the Club, and his heart

hardened as he felt the impossibility of his going to any one of his old time friends with his story of failure. He could not endure the advice they would bestow—nor the offer of checks—nor the constrained pity—perhaps sincere. No, he would go down with his colors flying—he would walk out forever, say at the end of a fine dinner. Then there would be a nine days' wonder over his disappearance, and some would miss him; but the Club, with its laughter and good stories, its wining and dining, would go on as before. It would soon forget him.

As he rode toward the Park along the right side of the Avenue, he passed a number of people he knew, in carriages and on foot, but so absorbed was he that he bowed to no one. "I fear 'Thorny' is playing in very hard luck," said one of his club friends, who was surprised not to receive a familiar nod, for he had always

been politeness personified. His face was flushed and anxious. His hand trembled as he lit a small cigar. "I see," he said to himself, "I shall not sleep, again, to-night"—he had not slept for a week. He directed the cab to stop at a popular hotel; got out, ran in, and drank a small glass of sherry. It made him feel a little better. The hotel, with its throngs of strangers, of business men who had dropped in on the way uptown, of guests hurrying to and fro, seemed to personify the entire city to him. "I shall know and be known no longer," he said aloud. "I might as well have it over with now, as well as any time." Then he stood still a moment. "No, no. There is no need—it would be brutal." Then he saw some strange faces staring suspiciously at him. Was he acting queerly then? He hurried out of the swinging glass doors, and got in his cab.

As the cab swung along in the Avenue and jolted and jostled over the worn pavement, he kept murmuring, "She wants me to resign—but I never—I shall never resign from the Club, I shall never resign. . . It is like leaving my only *home*."

He had for ten years together been secretary of the Club. He was still a member of the House Committee. He had, in fact, served from time to time on all the committees. He knew every member—every waiter—every servant by name. Years ago he had assisted in designing the very livery the waiters wore. He had managed the expensive refitting and rehabilitation of the Club. He had watched, as with a father's eye, its growth from its small beginning in a brick building over a store in Great Jones Street, until it had become the leading club on the Avenue—the home of swelldom —of the aristocrats. "No," he kept

murmuring over his cigar, "at least I shall never resign—it will not be necessary."

He drew near Fifty-ninth Street. Ethel, who had just come from her riding school, was standing on the corner of the street waiting for a stage. Near her stood a tall, prim-looking maid holding a riding-whip. Ethel was habited in a long, close-fitting English newmarket. Her riding-hat became her very well. Her brown hair was slightly disarranged and had fallen low upon her neck. She had a pensive, weary air, as if somewhat overfatigued. People stared as they passed on the sidewalk, and admired her beauty. To Thorndyke, as he got out of the cab and raised his hat, she never seemed so sweet—so charming. Her large dark eyes beamed with pleasure. She had not so much color as her mother, but her color rose as she gave her slender gloved hand to her uncle.

"It is quite late," he said; "I have come for you."

"As if I could not find my way home!" she laughed lightly.

"Yes, but New York is getting to be London in these matters," he said seriously.

"It's awfully good of you, at all events" —and she gave him a charming smile.

He hailed the stage and, with a certain old-fashioned, high-bred courtesy, assisted the prim maid to mount, and returned to his niece.

"It is not late—it is early," Ethel laughed, as she took her seat in the hansom. "Don't let us go home yet—a short drive in the Park, Uncle Percy; it will rest me."

"Oh, very well," he replied, looking at his watch, "we have half an hour. As far as the Museum," he called out to the driver, as he pushed open the little slide in the roof of the hansom and closed it

again. They trotted along for some moments in silence.

A string of carriages was passing them on the left. He observed a famous actress of the *opéra bouffe* approaching in an open landau, drawn by a pair of stylish little gray cobs in jingling silver harness. She had very gorgeous yellow hair, and wore a large hat trimmed with a vast quantity of artificial flowers. He felt panic-stricken for a moment, as it seemed to him that Maud Everard—whom he had known for many years—was about to bow. He tried to draw away Ethel's attention to a pair of gawky country folk who were standing at the right of the entrance of the Park. He said to himself angrily :

"Such a creature should not be allowed to flaunt herself so in public!"

But Ethel's eyes were fastened with a school-girl admiration upon the actress.

"Isn't she beautiful?" she whispered, recognizing the stage favorite; "and she looks—she looks as if—she knew you, Uncle Percy!"

Ethel gave him a sly glance, and laughed.

"Those country people over there are so amusing," he said indifferently, feeling himself grow red. "They look as if they had just arrived from Vermont, and were on the lookout for the ubiquitous bunco man——"

"Is she really as beautiful when you are close to her?" asked Ethel teasingly.

"A large percentage of paint and powder, I dare say," he laughed. "Ah, there is Mrs. Fitzwilliams—she has a *musicale* this evening."

He made a graceful bow to a lady in a barouche, and laughed again lightly. He felt very much like himself once more.

"Oh! how I should love to go on the stage," sighed Ethel.

"Yes, you would not be a true New York school-girl unless you did have aspirations that way," he laughed. "It is like the measles—the whooping-cough; you will survive it."

She pinched his arm.

"You must be more respectful," she said with affected solemnity.

He laughed again noisily.

"How stupid of you!" she complained, as they jogged along; "you laugh at anything—and you laugh so loud!"

Beside him sat the young girl, grown up to be a woman now, whom years ago he used to carry about the house in his arms, whom he used to trot on his knee, and whose every change in development he had witnessed with a sort of awe. It seemed to him as if he saw, suddenly, a vision of a gradation of Ethels, from the superb young creature at his side to a little white infant, cooing upon a soft pillow of expensive lace. She still kept

the first tiny ring he had given her—a little circlet of minute diamonds—and she wore in her fragrant hair a long Etruscan pin of gold—his latest offering. He had petted her, laughed at her, loved her as the apple of his eye. In his secret soul, too, he had idolized her, and her sweet girlish image had often come between him and temptation. But with it all—for he had been brought up, don't you know, chiefly in club life—he recognized the fact that there would come a change when she knew he was penniless. She would not mean to act differently. She would be even more kind, more affectionate. But she was in the world, and he—he would be going out of it. Their *camaraderie* must cease. He would become to her only "Poor Uncle Percy." He remembered the kind of companions she had to do with at school—the expensively reared, expensively dressed, expensively educated young girls who

would be too polite to speak of it, but who would deplore with her his condition as something not to be mentioned.

The thought of losing her was more than he could bear. He became suddenly silent, and remote.

Ethel herself became silent. At first she attempted to keep up the conversation by asking him—the encyclopedia of family history—whether she ought to "know" a certain Miss Poddles, who had recently entered her school, and who was the daughter of a rich fashionable tailor; but as they drove on, she saw that something troubled him, and glanced at him with mute questioning.

"I am really very unhappy," he said sadly, "in spite of my noisy laughter, which so disturbs you."

"And so, *really*, am I," she replied.

"You?"

"Yes." She gazed at him imploringly and looked down.

"And you will tell me about it?"

"Yes." She waited a moment and then said, "*I am in debt.*"

She spoke in low, weak tones. It was a very serious matter. There was a note of despair in her voice, as she glanced at him timidly, to see if he would rebuke her. At any previous time her confession would have enormously amused him. He would have been inclined to tease her a little, to pretend that for her to owe money was something unspeakable. He would have made an immense joke of it, and would have ended by giving her twice the amount she required.

But now he could only lean his head near hers, and, with a comic sadness, whisper:

"So am I!"

"We are very foolish, you and I!" she said, after an agitated pause. "And I could not—I dare not tell mamma."

"Nor I," he smiled, very truthfully.

"And when she knows—but she mustn't know, Uncle Percy!"

"No," he admitted, at the same time throwing away his cigar.

"Oh, I'm so glad I have told you! And you will pay it, won't you, and I shall never, *never*—buy bonbons and things I like again unless I have the money. But all the girls do it—and then we find they send the bills home! They actually sent their bill to mamma; it was on the breakfast table, and I saw it among her mail this very morning; but mamma was so engrossed with Colonel Bullock's letter——"

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "He has written?"

"Oh—he writes and calls—*all* the time."

"Does he?"

"But mamma will never have him. She once told me so herself—it's such a pity." His face fell again. He hoped differently.

"How much is your debt?" he asked, not wishing to pursue the marriage matter with Georgianna's daughter.

"It is something more than sixteen dollars——"

"We can drive around there to the bonbon store and pay it at once." He felt for a small wad of bills in his vest pocket as he spoke. She clapped her hands delightedly. "Oh, you good *Thing!*" she cried. "You dear good *Thing!* Goodness! what a relief!" And she sank back with a sigh of gratitude, her face suddenly radiant.

He fancied that he had arrived at the point for extorting a little sympathy.

"What would you say, Ethel, if I told you my affairs were so bad, you know—that I was really—forced to give up the Club?"

"I should say it would be just splendid."

"How?" he asked, bewildered.

"Because I don't approve of clubs—unless they have lectures."

He perceived that she had reference to one or two famous social organizations of the city, where ladies and gentlemen in evening dress were wont to listen to learned discussions upon "Cosmos" and "Origins," study the lecturer through lorgnettes and opera glasses, and then eat melted ice cream and stale sponge cake afterward.

"But, I mean—where I have always lived—my Club—you know—my *home*."

"Uncle Percy, forgive me—but it must be a horrible place!"

He was mute with astonishment. He had never heard her betray these sentiments before.

"I have often wondered how you *could* have anything to do with men who stare so—and are so silly," she said. Then, noticing his look of surprise. "To be sure, clubs serve their purpose, for Made-

moiselle Clarence always says she walks us by them to make us hard—to make us brazen! She walks us by all the clubs she can find, so that no one ever after shall be able to stare us out of countenance!"

His heart sank with her levity. He was in no mood for jesting.

"And you must see that the Club keeps you away from us so much. And aren't you tired and wearied, dear Uncle Percy, with smoking and drinking—and then varying the monotony of it by drinking *and* smoking? Oh, it will be so much better for you to resign—and it will keep you out of temptation."

He became a little provoked. He failed to see that the girl was but reflecting, without reason, her mother's many animadversions. It came so easily to this pretty young creature to affect her mother's wisdom, to prescribe for him this drastic remedy—to change the entire cur-

rent of his life—it was such a trifling affair!

"And that isn't *all;* they gamble for money in clubs"—she nodded her head for confirmation. "So Bessie Lanier told me. Her brother has lost—lots."

Ethel gave him a motherly little glance. There was no tragedy here, for her.

"You ought to give it up, as you ought to give up dancing, and doing nothing. Mamma says that you spend too much there."

Here Thorndyke changed the subject adroitly to the dancing class at Mrs. N——'s. It was to come off in a few days. He accurately noted the day, for some reason. The cab had now reached the Museum, and turned about.

On the way home he listened quietly to a long story about one of Ethel's school friends, whom he had never seen, whose parents, whom he did not know, objected to the attentions of a certain lad

who lived somewhere in New Jersey. By the time they reached the Belgravia, he had silently told himself that he really had very little left to live for. It seemed to him that Ethel would only continue to grow—not to be *his* Ethel, *his* charming, loving niece—but to be more like her mother. He saw a dreary vista of the years before him. "Ah," he sighed, as he left her, and drove off to pay her candy bill, "she, too, is acquiring so soon the heartless polish of the world!"

Old worldling as he was, for a moment he wished he had been born a simple laboring man, with a homely wife, a dozen "brats," and the sincerity and sympathy of "heart to heart." It was all very well when there was plenty of money. Something took the place of feeling then. What was it? Perhaps it was the "continuosity of amusements," as Georgianna had said one day—there was no time to be sad. There was always gayety, be-

cause there was no sense of distress. People might sicken and die—but the dinners and dances went on continuously. "I am an unconscionable hypocrite," he said aloud, as, after going home to dress, he entered the Club an hour later. "I am a coward, too. I cannot stand up and take defeat!"

And this continual self-apprehension, too, was not the best thing in the world for him, don't you know.

IV.

Oppressed with a conflict of emotions, Thorndyke entered the reading room of the Club, now full of a multitude of men chatting, drinking cocktails, and awaiting their dinner announcements. He sat down immediately at one of the writing tables. He had now resolved to be very manly, very straightforward. He would, after all, resign from the Club, and frankly state his reasons. He had got to

the end of his rope. He simply could not afford it. Let the shock come. Let what would happen, happen.

He caught the eyes of several friends about the room and nodded. It always gave him a pleasant sensation when he heard a man order *his* cocktail. There were four half-emptied "Byrons" on the little round table in the center of a group of brokers near him—how strangely pleased this made him!

The moral atmosphere of the Club, too, rather braced him. "No sneaks are tolerated *here*," he said to himself. "It is a fair fight, and one side must always lose. I have lost. There is no disgrace. I want, I need no sympathy. I am myself. I wish I was younger; but I am young enough yet to make a fortune."

He began a letter to "the Hon. the Secretary of the City Club," with a great flourish. Then he glanced about the room. There were the usual little groups

of toadies, gathered, like flies around the molasses cup, about the men who owned yachts. Many men, rather proud of knowing Thorndyke, called out to him conspicuously: "Have something, Thorny, won't you?" Others were plunged in the evening papers, and did not look up from them. There was the little, slight, pale man who looked like a fresh-water college professor, and who seemed to be so ascetic, so strangely out of place in the Club; there was also the Club "ghost," whom no one knew, except, perhaps, Thorndyke himself. He cheered the poor "ghost" with a friendly nod. There was Pebbles, and Jack Benson, and that old standby and steady goer, Tom Alsingham; there was Harrington, the editor of the *Upshot;* all of them well-dressed, jolly, easy-going, full-voiced, fat. Over in a corner were gathered a circle of yachting men, for the racing season was now about to begin.

There seemed to be no one who was at all miserable! Yet—if the truth were known? The Club requires of one to wear such a contented, cheerful mask!

He returned to his letter.

H. WETMORE BYFIELD, ESQ., *Sec'y, etc.*

DEAR SIR: Circumstances compel me to announce to you that I shall be obliged to resign from the Club——

He was disturbed by the loud laughter near him of some half dozen men, gathered about the owner of one of the crack racing stables of the day. One of the group rose and came up to him familiarly. He was a slim, elegantly dressed, tall young man, with a hard-set face, as if it had been studiously carved out of old ivory. Jack Chalmers had inherited an enormous fortune, and was rapidly engaged in making away with it. He was still a young man, not twenty-eight. Everyone in the Club saw very plainly that he was setting himself too fast a

pace. He was popular, too, well liked, gay, charming, a gentleman. He would be a decided loss to the Club. A word or two of advice from some of the older ones might be of great service to him. But, of course, it was no one's business to speak that which was on everyone's mind. It is not the way in clubs. A year later he died of a sudden attack, after a very "heavy" night of it.

Chalmers leaned down and whispered in Thorndyke's ear, "I am in for a little supper to-night, at Del's, after the theater. I count on you, Thorny; and I want that famous 'Italiano' story, you know. Kate Finis will be there and Maud Everard, and there will be some singing and recitations. Hilgard has promised me some tricks——"

"Oh, I know very well what there will be!" laughed Thorndyke. "I'm sorry, but I can't be there, Jack; I have an engagement."

When this is once said to clubmen, nothing further is ever necessary. Jack Chalmers merely gave a shrug of his shoulders and drew himself up.

"Oh, by the way, Jack, will you do me a favor?" said Thorndyke. "I want to borrow a hundred and fifty."

"Certainly, old man, with pleasure. Come outside."

They went together through the wide marble hallway into a small reception-room. Here Chalmers took out an enormous wad of bills from his vest-pocket.

"I have had the greatest luck at the Park," he said. "I have made five thousand in three days, on my own stable, too; a rare thing for me. I wish you would take all of this 'stuff' and keep it for me, Thorny."

"No," said Thorndyke peremptorily, "I only want a hundred and fifty."

His bearing was very much as if *he* was doing the favor.

"Oh, very well!" said Jack Chalmers, rather struck by his tone, and he counted out the money.

Thorndyke sat down at the writing table again, and took up his pen. While writing, he pressed a button, and called a waiter.

"Bring me my monthly statement from the office," he said to the waiter, and resumed his letter to the secretary. After he had written a line further, he tore the letter up, and threw the pieces into the waste-paper basket. He began another letter, merely stating very baldly the fact that he would resign from the Club. He was equally dissatisfied with this, also, and as he began to tear it up Colonel Bullock entered, and stood a moment in the door-way looking around to find someone to dine with him. He was a tall, massive, elderly man, with a prominent nose, thin, intelligent face, and iron-gray side-whiskers. At present he

was the hero of a large, successful Wall Street "deal." He had been able, with the assistance of several of his friends, to make the bears "squirm" in a certain railway stock. Indeed, he had squeezed them, as he had said, "for all they were worth." Several men, who had lost heavily through his manipulations, nodded to him with pleasant, friendly smiles. There seemed to be no ill-feeling against him. It had been a fair fight. They would have squeezed *him* if they could! It seemed as if they rather admired him for his adroitness.

"Hallo, Thorny!" he cried, in a loud, full, hearty voice, slapping him on the shoulder. "Come, dine with me; we'll get Cushman."

Thorndyke hesitated. He bit the end of his pen.

"I see fresh country mushrooms on the bill of fare," said Colonel Bullock insinuatingly, "They are *fried!*" he

whispered unctuously. He knew Thorndyke's weaknesses. "Come, I'll get Cushman—and I'll count on you—you are alone?"

"Yes, but——"

"Well, then of course you'll dine with me!"

And with that the colonel brusquely moved away in the direction of a little bald-headed man, who was talking animatedly to a circle of men about the then prospective international yacht race.

"Oh, go order your dinner!" Thorndyke called to the colonel. Then he resumed his letter of resignation, filing it down to the merest announcement. "I hereby resign from the Club. Yours, etc." The waiter brought him his statement, and, as usual with clubmen, he thought, from the size of the amount, he was being cheated. But he did not hesitate to draw a check for the full amount,

and send it in to the clerk. After he had done this, he said to himself: "There is now no reason why my resignation cannot be accepted."

The colonel, with Cushman's aid, ordered a very elaborate dinner. In the pauses of conversation—Cushman was an inveterate talker—Thorndyke occasionally opened his lips to give forth a weighty saying, such as:

"We are growing too much like the London clubs—the toadies gather about a yacht-owner as they do there about a lord."

Again: "The Club is not what it was, there are too many youngsters coming in. The Committee on Admissions don't seem to realize the uses of the blackball. There is that confounded cad Blickly—how did he ever get in?"

Again: "Everything is getting so common. I'm told they are going to enlarge

again—well, it is too large already. It is like a Broadway hotel."

As he said this, the colonel said gruffly: "If it's getting too common for you, why the devil don't you resign and get out?" Thorndyke's tone offended him.

He looked at the colonel with a hurt astonishment, and the latter hastened to add kindly: "But if you did get out, Thorny, a fish out of water wouldn't be a circumstance! You would languish and die! Why, you are a big part of the Club to many of us. So, on the whole, you had better stay in, make the best of it, and be civil to that blackguard Blickly and the young chaps!"

Cushman expressed a similar sentiment. He was one of the old men, and he and Thorndyke had served together on many committees.

"Why," went on the colonel, as the Delbeck champagne, iced to a nicety, be-

gan to warm him, "you are a club fixture. I never entered the door without finding you somewhere—and I've been in and out the Club thirty years. I don't believe I'd stay in a minute if you and 'Cush' and Lamson got out. My daughter tells me to come around here oftener. She says I ought to begin to take things easier, that I'm getting old and feeble"—here he laughed a little. "But I defy anyone to take things easy in New York. It's drive—drive, push—push. You're the only man I know who never seems hurried, Thorny; I have often watched you—you are as deliberate as a messenger boy! Well, it's time I began to be deliberate, too. We are all getting old, boys—I should like to settle down—it's quite time!"

Thorndyke thought of the half dozen visiting cards of the colonel he had seen in the card-tray at his sister's, and said nothing.

"To be sure, I'm pretty old to marry again. I was fifty-eight last month. But I feel I should be more contented."

"Oh, of course," said Cushman, who knew, as did all the world, of the colonel's *penchant* for Georgianna Batterson.

"My children are grown up and have children of their own. They care nothing about me," and the colonel sipped his champagne meditatively. "They always appear to me to be wondering how I will 'cut up.'"

"I hear you have just made a clean million," said Thorndyke. "I fancy you will cut up very well."

Colonel Bullock laughed. "Well," he said, with amusing drollery, "I may wish to found *the* great American University —it is quite the fashion."

"It would be very *diverting*—for your heirs!" laughed Cushman.

They rose from the table and strolled out, with a plethoric sense of the comfort

of having dined well, into the café for coffee and cigars. On the way, the colonel slid his arm into that of Thorndyke. "Your sister Georgianna is a mighty fine girl," he whispered. Thorndyke said nothing. "She has had, so far, the hardest kind of luck. Now I'm going to change it. I'm going to see to it that in future she has an easy time."

Just then a friend came up and joined them. They glanced at each other, however, smiled, and shook hands. It was understood. Thorndyke could wish no better fate for his sister than to be the wife of the Wall Street "magnate." But the announcement gave him a further sense of his own isolation. How often, indeed, would Ethel think of him, when, backed by the generous old colonel's millions, her mother and she took their "proper" place in society?

The friend ordered kummel and ice for himself and Cushman, and a little brandy

for the colonel, with their coffee and cigars. Thorndyke excused himself and went away. He felt suddenly very lonely in the noisy talking, laughter, and jollity that went on all around him—yet he wished to be alone. He had gone through periods of financial depression before, but this—this had a horrible significance, as though he dared not tell himself—*it was the end!* His buoyancy was gone—he *must* go down, forever!

He wandered up the broad marble stairs to the library. There was Bailey, a poor "scrub" of a librarian, reading. He sat and talked a full half-hour with him, and when he rose, went down and out of the Club.

"To think of spending an evening in the library!" he laughed; "it is quite time I resigned!"

He looked at his watch. It was not yet nine. He was still on the quest for a little sympathy. "I'll go and call on

Alice Apthorn," he said; "I have not been there for a year."

He walked up the Avenue for several blocks, and turned off down one of the thirtieth streets. Visions of other days, bright and gay with the joyousness which pervaded the city just after the close of the War, came to him. He remembered that he had come very near asking Alice Apthorn to be his wife. She was, in the early days, a pretty, delicate girl, who very oddly had succeeded in making a hero of Thorndyke, and so worshiping him. She had been a great musician in the days when Gottschalk was the reigning sovereign of the piano, and young girls played "pieces," and to play a violent waltz or schottische was an accomplishment. In those days they had played duets together. Thorndyke felt a pang of strange regret as he observed the faded, old grand piano still ornamenting a corner of the Apthorns' drawing

room. He had sent his card up, and was waiting the appearance of Miss Apthorn as he opened the key-board and touched a few of the yellow ivory keys. How stringy the old piano sounded! How ancient—how musty the odor! Suddenly all the intervening years—the wasted years—disappeared, and he recalled an evening long ago, after the others had gone, when he had taken her hand. They had been on the point of an understanding; something had interrupted them. He had never arrived at the point again. His fancy had drifted to the other girls, more fair—more beautiful.

He stood leaning on the old piano, meditating a moment. The house had been improved and decorated again and again; but the piano stood just where it had always done—by the window, as he had known it in the old days.

The footman entered. He turned around,

"Miss Apthorn has gone to the country, sir. I didn't know it, sir; she sits in her room so much, sir, and makes so little stir in the house; but she went to her friends in the country this afternoon."

He went out again into the ill-lighted street, feeling a special grief. Suppose he *had* married, and possessed a houseful of sons and daughters! There came again the "wasted years," the club life, the vanished pleasures.

He stopped still in the street. "I shall—simply—go—raving mad, if this thing keeps up!" he cried aloud, angrily.

He went back to the Club, making up his mind to give up the *musicale* at Mrs. Fitzwilliam's, on Washington Square, the engagement which he meant to keep when he refused Jack Chalmers' *petit souper* at Delmonico's. He fell in with some friends in the billiard room, who were indulging in pool, with a "wet"

ball. He drank heavily, as they did also, and felt a return of his old confidence and *aplomb*. It was after two when they sent him home in a cab.

When he awoke next morning it was nine o'clock by his watch, and the sun was shining into his little, narrow hall bedroom in the boarding house.

V.

He went to the Club, as usual, for his breakfast, having dressed himself in his rough business suit, and arranging his scarf with his usual care. On the way he purchased a fresh rosebud for his buttonhole. He sauntered down Fifth Avenue in the cool, bracing air, looking as rosy and contented as a king. No one ever had accused him of sentiment, or of depression—he *looked* too fat, too robust. It is very difficult to accept the fact that the pale, large-eyed, and emaciated are really less to be depended on

for the emotions than the fat kind. It is the unappreciated heavy-weight who sheds the tears at the play! Adipose tissue is sometimes also a capital mask. Thorndyke betrayed no outward and visible sign of his inward despair. His head was erect, his stride manly and full of vim. He carried himself with the grand air of success. Some ladies whom he passed, who were out for early shopping, declared that he looked positively handsome—he bowed to them with such fine, old-fashioned grace and manner. He passed many a house on the Avenue, above Twenty-sixth Street, where, formerly, he had been a frequent guest. A huge gilt sign was plastered across the front of the brown-stone "front" where, in the old days, he had led many a german. The sign read, "W. Edgar Montgomery, Saddler to the Prince of Wales," and below were the traditional three feathers. It seemed to him, in the

wilderness of English haberdashery, as though Regent Street had transferred itself bodily to New York. The destruction of Fifth Avenue, however, had been of too long occurrence to give him, this morning, an additional pang. He entered the Club with a sprightly air, and spoke to the hall-man with his usual condescension. As Thorndyke walked into the *café* to order his breakfast, an old waiter approached him with an air of mystery. He had an affection for Johnson, who had many years before been his father's butler. Originally of American birth, Johnson had seen that it was for his interest to cultivate the English manner. He learned to drop his "h's," and he wore the conventional mutton-chop.

"What is it, Johnson?" he asked, in surprise.

"I was thinkin', mebbe, that hafter all ye've done fer me, sor——"

Thorndyke hardly knew whether to be

angry or not. Evidently Johnson was about to offer a loan.

"Beggin' yer pard'n, sor." Johnson looked very miserable.

Thorndyke walked on into the café. He proceeded to write out his breakfast order, looking steathily around the room to see if the half dozen men who were breakfasting at little, neat tables had noticed the affair. The very waiters knew of his distress!

He took a seat at his favorite table—where he had breakfasted for so many years, by the window which surveyed the Avenue, and glanced over the morning paper. His eye rested on a sensational head-line, "The Disappearance of a Noted Gambler." "In a few days," he smiled cynically, "it will be 'The Disappearance of a Noted Clubman.'" A waiter brought in Thorndyke's mail. There were half a dozen invitations and a note from Georgianna, in which she announced that she

was to be married in the fall to Colonel Bullock.

"I couldn't force myself to tell you when you called," the letter wound up, in her large, bold handwriting, "because you seemed so unsympathetic. I was afraid you would say it wasn't best."

"Unsympathetic!" he laughed cynically.

When the old waiter Johnson came to clear away the breakfast things after Thorndyke had left, he found a five-dollar bill tucked under a plate.

"Clare agin the rules," muttered the old servitor, "but it haint the first time he's broke them rules this way. God bless him fer the finest gintleman as the Club—yes—or the city's ever seen! The finest gintleman in this or hany city." And Johnson limped away through the swing door, muttering and carrying away Thorndyke's breakfast things—for the last time.

The old beau went down to his "business"—he had a desk in Harry Newbold's office in New Street—and sat for a long time that morning figuring upon backs of envelopes, and over little scraps of paper. They brought him word that C. K. & K. C. had fallen off a few points, and he gave an order to close out the transaction for good and all. After he had spent the morning at his desk he burned in the grate a great many old letters—some in feminine hands—and a great many documents and papers of all sorts. Over some of these old letters he pondered a long while, in silent grief—the love letters seemed to speak to him from the heart—to recall once happy hours—to tell him they were no more. He closed up his desk and locked it, saying he would not be down for a day or two, as he was going out with Cushman to Trixedo. He went up town and called on Georgianna. By the fervor of his

congratulations—he even dared to kiss her gently—she was quite overcome. She cried a little. Ethel came in and went out with a superior, condescending little air. She quite patronized her mother in her plans of marriage. Thorndyke noticed she wore a new and expensive silver chatelaine at her belt, and felt a pang of jealousy against the usurping colonel. "His gifts begin as mine end!" he said to himself, with bitterness.

He went out to Trixedo for three days with his friend, and while at Mrs. Cushman's pretty cottage on the lake, was especially amusing and full of the glories of his youth. He kept a large party at the dinner table very silent, listening to his reminiscences of the great men who had gone before. He told half a dozen new stories—personal to himself—of the witty Travers. He told also some amusing anecdotes of Tweed, whom he knew, of Jim Fisk, and of the old fire companies

before the days of horses and steam. The ladies petted him, made much of him, flattered him to his heart's content. His knowledge of the world was varied and extended. There was hardly a great name that he had not known, a great actress or *diva* whom he had not chatted with behind the scenes. Many said, afterward, that in the brilliant little coterie which assembled those early summer days at Trixedo, Percy Thorndyke seemed to expand and become what he had been years before, and what, owing to his misfortunes, he had not been for a long time past—one of the most entertaining of *bons viveurs*. He had an airy little old-fashioned manner of telling a story which, in these latter days of directness, was very fascinating. Very often, as he became excited, he would rise and act out his stories with the most amusing by-play. In the adulatory atmosphere of a younger race of men and

pretty women he found his element. He became *himself*, the great Thorndyke.

He went into town on the day of Mrs. N——'s dancing class. He came in with a bevy of pretty girls who were going to be present. He was like a young gallant in the midst of them in the drawing-room car, pretending that the young men who were on hand were unworthy of any attention—laughing with them and amusing them until they arrived at the ferry. On applying at his banker's he found, to his surprise, that his account had been increased in his absence by his brokers to the extent of several hundred dollars. He spent the afternoon writing a long letter marked "In confidence" to Colonel Bullock, stating frankly and fully his reasons for leaving the city, and seeking his fortune in San Francisco. The annuity should still be punctually paid—it could now, on Georgianna's marriage, perhaps, be turned over to Ethel. He arranged it so,

he said, that his creditors could not touch it. He asked the colonel to send Jack Chalmers his money and he would refund it as soon as he was able to do so. On the way uptown he stopped and bought a pretty diamond necklace for Ethel. It left him a hundred and seventy-five dollars in his pocket, and that was enough. His many and great debts—well—he would live to pay them some day. He dined alone at the Club, for the last time—refusing several invitations. There was a special brand of Rhine wine—Ober Ingelheimer—of which he was very fond, and which he had introduced into the Club. He ordered a bottle. It tasted corked to him. He sent it away, dictatorially, and had another. He ordered only those especial dishes of which he was most fond—artichokes, mushrooms, redwing duck, for he felt deeply the tragedy of his last little dinner and—he was good to himself! At eight o'clock he repaired to

Georgianna's, lighting himself on the way the most expensive cigar he could buy.

It was the night of the dancing class. He observed a coupé waiting at the door as he entered the wide portal of the Belgravia, and hastened into the elevator.

Ethel was standing on a sheet, full-dressed in white, in the pretty parlor under the brilliant electric lights. Georgianna and a maid were each on their knees before her, holding pins in their mouths, and having all the appearance of devout worshipers. Thorndyke, as he stood admiring his niece's extraordinary beauty, felt like falling down himself. The presence of his sister alone restrained him from performing any boyish pantomime of admiration. Her dress of white tulle was very "frenchy," very exquisite. It showed enough, but not too much, of the sweet curve of her young shoulders and the tender lines of her breast. She carried a bunch of pink roses. He approached his

niece, and taking the diamond necklace out of its case, clasped it round her throat.

"Oh," cried Georgianna, sitting back on the floor, "you don't think I'm going to let that child wear diamonds!"

"Oh, please, mamma!" cried Ethel, her face radiant with delight.

Thorndyke looked annoyed. The slender necklace certainly became her wonderfully. The line of small brilliants called one's attention to the superb whiteness of her throat, and gave an added grace to its perfect symmetry.

"Diamonds—and an unmarried girl in her teens!—absurd!" cried Georgianna, through her pins. "Though it was very kind of you, Percy; but you have allowed your own fondness for diamonds to quite run away with you. Besides, as Mme. Fontaine, who imported the dress from Paris, says: 'Mademoiselle must wear no jewels vatsomever.'

Ethel unclasped the necklace and kissed her uncle. "Never mind," she whispered. "I *will* wear it anyway. Mamma shan't know. I will slip the necklace in my pocket."

Her mother overheard her,

"Give it to me!" she insisted, rising.

Her brother made a step forward.

"Georgianna, I ask it as a favor," he said, "some day you will know why."

"What! how absurd!" Her voice had assumed its high loud key. "You must be crazy, Percy. Don't you know that young girls *never* wear diamonds?"

"Then *I insist* that she shall wear them!"

His voice was raised, too, and his face was set and determined. For once his sister quailed before him. She looked at him a moment in silence. She was on the point of saying something unkind, but she restrained herself. She was frightened. Suddenly she became very meek.

There was something terrible in his eyes.

"It is only because I fear they will make her a laughing-stock," she murmured.

"Oh, how absurd, mamma!" cried Ethel, going to her uncle's side.

He clasped the necklace about her throat again, and kissed her tenderly.

"Oh, how you are trembling, Uncle Percy!" she cried, alarmed.

"It is nothing. Good-night, Ethel; I am going."

"You are going—so soon?"

"Good-night!"

He turned away, full of trepidation.

Ethel followed him to the door, leaving her mother standing in the middle of the floor, wondering, perplexed. She called out to him:

"Of course, Percy—I—I know how good of you to give Ethel—so much—to do so much——"

Georgianna's voice softened as she spoke. She, too, went to the door. On the landing she saw Ethel clasped close in her brother's arms. He seemed to be oblivious of her, and he stood crazily rocking to and fro, as if undergoing some deep, hidden agony which she could not fathom.

Her woman's instinct overcame all her fears, however.

"Percy!" she cried, "don't you see you are spoiling Ethel's new dress?"

Instantly he released her.

"Good-by, my darling Ethel," he cried, "God bless you! You will be the coming queen, as your mother was—in the old days! in the old days!"

A moment later he descended in the elevator to the street, and was gone. Ethel, pale and frightened, sank on a chair, in tears.

A year or two later a little group of men were sitting in the Club window,

looking out, late in the afternoon of a mild April day, upon the crush of carriages, and the throngs of well-dressed women, hastening to the unsatisfactory reception and the insipid afternoon tea. Lent was just over, and it was very gay. A clarence, drawn by two English grays, was detained for a moment before the window at the warning wave of a policeman's club. Some country people were trying to cross the Avenue.

The stoppage of the carriage afforded the Club a very admirable view of Ethel and her mamma, who were on their way to a fashionable tea. For a moment the little group of staring men seemed to be lost in silent admiration—for it was quite true that Ethel was repeating her mother's success.

As the carriage passed on, someone asked, casually :

"Oh, by the bye, whatever became of her uncle, who disappeared, don't you know ?"

"Drowned, wasn't he?" drawled another.

No one seemed to know. At last a young fellow, who had always felt highly flattered by a bow from Thorndyke, ventured:

"They say he is somewhere in California; how hard his going off that way must have been for his sister and his niece! I—I say—he was a beastly cad!"

Then they called the waiter, who took the orders, and the conversation fell upon other matters.

A NEW ENGLAND INGÉNUE.

I.

THE Archibald house, on West Forty —— Street, was of the character described as a "modernized front." A handsome arch in rough stone surmounted the front door, which was done in polished oak and plate glass. The stoop was on a level with the sidewalk; a richly carved bow window jutted out from the second story. "No. 41," in old iron open work, formed a pretty grating above the door. There was, in fact, nothing which would lead an ordinary person to conceive of the house as given over to boarders, except, possibly, the sign,

TO LET, FURNISHED

which was posted conspicuously below the first-story window, and at an angle which enabled him that ran to read.

Old Mr. Archibald's death, the autumn before, had left his widow rather poorer than she anticipated. He was a great collector of pretty things. His taste was exquisite, and he had gratified it by filling his house with a variety of *bric-à-brac*, pictures, statuary, and old furniture, which made it a center of attraction to many of the old gentleman's artistic friends. Mrs. Archibald, loath to dispose of her husband's art collections, determined to let the house, as it stood, "at an exorbitant figure, to a very rich tenant without children." Under these terms, on her departure for Europe, her agent was intrusted with the house, and her son Jerome, when he saw her off on the steamer, received a parting injunction: "Be sure and see that they have no children." Jerome Archibald

saw his mother and sisters depart—in no very enviable frame of mind; but he was a good son, and he resolved to forego Newport, if it would tend to dispose of the house as his mother wished and add to her diminished income.

His mother and sisters sailed in May. It was now July, and very warm and disagreeable. As the "heated term" set in, he began to think it too bad, you know, of mamma and the girls to remain abroad for three whole years. It was positively absurd. What was he to do? After the house was let—where was he to go? By Jove, he felt deuced lonely, don't you know! It was especially trying for a sensitive man to go in and out of a house with a great placard on it, "To Let, Furnished," but it was a deal more trying to have people come and want board. Yes, actually, two ladies came one morning and wanted to know if they could see the landlord. It was

positively ridiculous! His agent was a "clevah" fellow, but even he gave up hope of letting the house until fall. Hadn't he better run down to Newport? He got a letter from Dick Trellis that morning, and they really didn't see how they were going to get on without him in the polo matches. It put him in a fuming fury. He had never stayed late in the city in summer before. How infernally hot it was—and "nahsty"—don't you know! His collars were in a perpetual state of wilt—they never wilted at Newport. Then everybody was not only out of town, having a good time somewhere, but they had a provoking way now of ostentatiously boarding up their front doors—yes—and their windows, too—which made it doubly disagreeable for those who had to remain. It was bad enough to see the blinds drawn down, but boxing up their stone-work and planking up their front doors caused Mr.

Jerome Archibald unutterable pangs. Then they thought it was a boarding house!

They were coming again in the afternoon, at four. There were two of them—ladies. In his rather depressing and solitary occupation of living alone in his house, with one solemn apoplectic cook and one chalk-faced maid, in order to exhibit it to that endless raft of females with "permits," who universally condemned or "damned with faint praise" his father's exquisite taste in rugs and furniture, Mr. Jerome Archibald had to-day admitted to himself a distinct pleasure in showing "Miss Perkins" and her niece (whose name did not happen at the time to be mentioned) over the house, and pointing out in his quiet way its excellences.

They saw the sign, they said, and so made bold to enter. Evidently Miss Perkins was a prim, thin, tall, spectacled, New

England old maid. She had the delicate air and manner of a lady. A lady faded, perhaps, and unused to a larger social area than that surrounding her native village green. She had also the timid manner of hesitancy of New England spinsters—hesitancy concerning everything except questions of casuistry and religion—and seemed, in what she did, to be spurred on from behind by the niece, who was, on the whole, as Mr. Jerome Archibald told a friend at the Club later, "quite extraordinary."

In the first place, as he said, the niece was undeniably beautiful.

"She wore rawther an odd street dress," he said, "made up in the country somewhere, by a seamstress who gathered her crude notions of the prevailing fashions from some prevaricating ladies' journal, and her hat was something positively ridiculous—but her *face!*" The fastidious Mr. Jerome Archibald at once con-

ceded to it a certain patrician quality of elegance. It denoted pure blood and pure breeding, somewhere up among Vermont hills or Maine forests. A long line of "intelligent ancestors," perhaps. It was fine and—beautiful. The forehead high, nose straight, the large eyes gray, the mouth and chin sweet, and yet quite determined. When he showed them a large room at the rear, on the second story, facing the north, the niece had observed, with a lofty air—mind, the room was literally crammed with the most costly *bric-à-brac*—"I think this will suit me very well, aunt, dear, on account of the light."

He noticed in her unfashionable dress a certain artistic sense of freedom, a *soupçon* of colored ribbon here and there, and he concluded that she was all the more interesting, as an artist, in that she so quietly accepted the elegancies around her. She gave an unconscious sigh

over a small glass-covered "Woodland Scene," by Dupré. Mr. Jerome Archibald noticed it, and inwardly smiled, delighted.

Perhaps the niece captivated him the more by her silent appreciation of some things he himself admired exceedingly. It was odd that she seemed always to choose *his* favorites. There was nothing said as to the rent, the size of the house, the lot, the plumbing. He spent an hour showing his etchings alone, and in the afternoon, at four, they were coming again, "to decide."

II.

Of course Mr. Jerome Archibald must have been an extremely susceptible young man to have fallen in love at first sight with a strange young woman, who had come to look at his house with a view to renting. But he was—"rawther down and depressed." The usual sum-

mer malaria had set in. The usual excavations in the streets were going on—they were digging with "really extraordinary energy" that summer—the pavements were up on all the Fortieth streets. Fifth Avenue presented the appearance of a huge empty canal. It was something more, this presidential year, than the perennial laying down and taking up of pipes. "He was really ripe for *une grande affaire du cœur*" said one of his club friends, he was getting so lonesome. He *did* fall quite entirely in love, precipitately, unquestionably, in spite of the fact that they took the house for a boarding place! They asked to hire but one room only.

When they arrived, at 4 P. M., they sat a few moments in the reception room, while the chalk-faced, alert maid announced them to Archibald in the room above. Miss Perkins folded her faded, gloved hands in her lap and sat up on

the sofa stiffly. They had looked at ever so many houses, and they had come back to No. 41 with instinctive preference.

"I don't think one room would be so very expensive," said Miss Perkins. "He could put up two beds easily in that north room, and the room we saw on Thirty-fourth Street was only twelve dollars—what do you think, Elvira?"

"I think twelve dollars is altogether too high," said the niece, looking up from a delicate little Elzevir she was holding. "I think he wants to let the rooms very much; none of them seem to be taken. Remember it is midsummer, aunt, dear."

There was a little pause.

"Of course he will prefer having *nice* people. It will be a great help to your art, Elvira—you can study at a great advantage. There are so many pictures for you to copy. I think your father

would say it was a 'lucky find.' If you will persist in your art, why, I think we are very fortunate."

"You are always ready to sneer at my art, Aunt Perkins." And she gave a peculiar laugh.

"It is something that has come up since my day," she replied, glancing about over the pictures and the rare editions on the table. "I was brought up to plain living. But I guess if we can get it all for twelve dollars we ought to be satisfied. It's a pleasant change to see the city. It's pleasant to see these ornaments. Yes, I don't blame art so much as your father does, Elvira, and I don't believe *he* would blame it, if he knew we could have so much of it for twelve dollars."

"Father secretly admires it as much as I do," said the niece, "only he likes to talk."

Just then Mr. Jerome Archibald en-

tered. He was faultlessly dressed in half-mourning for his father. Indeed, he had dressed himself with exceeding care, being desirous, he frankly admitted to himself, of making an impression. He bowed graciously, and took Elvira's extended gloved hand, which, as she offered it, he held a moment. "Have you decided?" he asked.

They had explained, when they left in the morning, that they should want only one room, and he tacitly inferred that they would require board. He received a dreadful shock, but he made up his mind that the charming niece would prove the more charming on closer acquaintance, and he deliberately decided to keep both the gentle New Englanders under his roof for a time, if he could! The more he thought of the plan, the more interesting the situation became to him. He fairly dreaded, at last, lest they should find their way into a remote

boarding house in some cheap quarter of the city, where it would be quite impossible for him to follow them. He gravely announced to the astonished maid that he had determined to let out the room to the ladies, who, he pretended for her benefit, were old acquaintances. When they were announced he was scarcely able to conceal his pleasure. Mr. Jerome Archibald had fallen in love.

"We have decided to take one room," said Elvira, "if we can agree upon the price; and we wish to know the price of board——"

"We shan't want much to eat," put in Miss Perkins with a nervous twitch.

Archibald admirably concealed a smile. His long mustache aided him a good deal in doing this. He was still standing, and he put his hand to his lips: "I think we shall agree very easily upon the price," he said.

Miss Perkins again twitched a little.

"We thought twelve dollars—room and board——" she said, leaving the sentence half finished, while Elvira looked up at him expectantly.

"My dear ladies, I should not think of charging more than ten. You are strangers in the city, and I would not impose upon you for the world. It happens that this is the dull season——"

"So we thought," said Miss Perkins, "and board and lodging ought to come a little cheaper."

"Precisely. The maid will show you your sleeping room—and, of course, the entire house is at your service. I hope you will find everything to your comfort. I am very anxious to please." He laughed a little.

Elvira gave him a grateful, but at the same time a rather patronizing, glance. He felt at once that in carrying out his little *ruse* he had placed himself deliberately upon a questionable footing

with the beautiful girl. He hoped, however, to redeem himself by impressing her with his knowledge of the pursuit which, he accurately judged, had brought the ladies to the city. Archibald had at one time done a little painting himself. He had dreamed dreams, as a young man, which indolence and the stern business atmosphere of the city had choked off prematurely. As he looked down upon the girl's sweet gray eyes a vision of this youthful period came back to him. Twenty-two and thirty-two have this in common, that the latter age is not too far away to quite despise the younger enthusiasm. Archibald at thirty-two still believed in himself, don't you know.

III.

Several days passed, during which the ladies settled themselves very readily in their new surroundings. They were

very methodical, preferring to rise at an hour which, to Archibald, was something savoring of barbarism. He studied their habits with a view to conforming to them as far as possible, but found that he could not bring himself to give up his nine o'clock breakfasts, and so went out to his club, leaving orders that the ladies should be accommodated at the earliest hour they might choose. He found that they had discovered Central Park, and came to make it a habit to stroll with them of a morning upon the Mall, and around the stagnant lakes. Central Park was a novelty to him, except as seen from horseback or a four-in-hand, and it really seemed very beautiful those summer mornings—he was really surprised, don't you know! He wondered that nice people did not use the Park more—as they did Hyde Park in London. As the days went on he filled his house with flowers, turned the second

floor into an immense studio for Elvira, sat about and watched her, criticised, encouraged her. He forgot Newport, forgot his polo. He had strangely ceased to be bored. He was happy in New York in midsummer! Dick Trellis told his polo friends at Newport that Archibald was probably undergoing private treatment for softening of the brain, which theory, in fact, they deemed sufficiently complimentary.

As for his mother and sisters in Europe—why, pray, should he inform them of his little joke?

Elvira worked away at her easel when the light was best—during the afternoon. In the evening, after dinner, the ladies became socially inclined. It was then that they allowed Archibald to smoke in the "studio" and talk art with Elvira.

Indeed he found it very difficult to talk anything else with the shy New England primrose.

About Art—with a big A—she was rapturous. There seemed to be in her soul a strange hunger for everything ornate and richly beautiful. Archibald devoted himself to studying her. He became strangely interested in East Village, Vt., where, he gathered, the Honorable Ephraim B. Price, her father, was a very distinguished Republican lawyer and politician. He drew Aunt Perkins out concerning her Congregational church, her minister, her fear of the Catholics, her fondness for cats, her secret disbelief in Art. Once in a while they read him a letter from the Honorable Ephraim, in which he could see reflected their own liking for *him*. He found that he was spoken of as "Landlord Archibald." The Honorable Ephraim was a shrewd old fellow, however, and his counsels and advice were generally of the "trust-not-too-much-to-appearances" order. One evening Miss Perkins complained of a

headache, and Archibald found himself alone for an hour with Elvira. She sat beneath the rich brazen lamp, with its pretty crimson shade, absorbing some of the red glow in her lovely face. They had been two weeks in the city, and out of delicate feeling had deposited two ten-dollar bills upon the mantelpiece in the library, where Archibald would see them. He had roared with laughter over them and intended having them framed, but ultimately he found a different use for their amusing board-money.

He made some little allusion to the time they had been with him.

"Two very short weeks," said Elvira, "and you have been so very unusually kind, Mr. Archibald. You have done so much for us. We have noticed it. Is it usual for landlords to—to do so much, in the city?"

"It depends," he said gravely. "Land-

lords do more for people who are congenial—you are congenial——"

"Oh!" A slight pause.

"You are more than congenial, *really*," said Archibald. "For you take an interest, Miss Price. I have secretly espied both you and your aunt dusting——"

Elvira bit her lip. "We *have* dusted," she admitted, reddening a little, "but it is merely the force of habit."

"Really," said Archibald, "I rawther like you the better for it, don't you know!"

"I'm afraid," said Elvira, her face lighting up with conscious pleasure, "that you have made up your mind as a landlord to like us, whatever we do. I'm afraid you would not like it at all if you knew everything that aunt has done."

"Tell me—I will keep it a profound secret, I assure you," he laughed.

"She has actually dared to invade your kitchen!"

"Has she?" said Archibald dubiously; "really!"

"Yes, and she declares that your cook wastes enough every day to keep four families!"

"Really!" said Archibald. "I'll have to look into it."

"You won't save much out of what we pay," said Elvira, "and we don't want to stay if it doesn't pay you; but——"

"Well?"

"Mr. Archibald, we are poor." She looked down.

"I'm very sorry, I'm sure—I——" he really did feel a compassion which found its way into his voice, and made it tremble a little.

"Aunt says you *can't* be making any money. Now, we don't think it is right to stay another day and be *burdens*, do you see?"

A solemn pause.

"Isn't that what they are talking about

so much now in the novels?" he asked at length.

"What?"

"The terrible New England conscience?"

"Right is right and wrong is wrong, Mr. Archibald, disguise it how we may." And Elvira compressed her pretty lips firmly.

Archibald puffed on his cigar lazily.

"I wasn't sure," he said, as if a doubt had crept into his mind.

She glanced at him impatiently.

"Can't you *see* how wrong it would be for us to stay here and enjoy all we have in your beautiful house, knowing that we were swindling you?" She stamped her foot. "Mercy!" she added, half to herself, "what *can* you be made of?"

He hastened to a display of rugged conscience, which relieved her.

"Oh, of course, I see how wicked it would be if you *did* swindle; but I'm

making money! Really—I haven't spent the twenty dollars board-money yet. Oh, pray rest assured—I shan't lose. I will tell you when I run behind."

A great sense of relief seemed to come over the girl.

"But it is all we can pay. I told father I would not ask for more. Father said he knew it would take more, but I said I would give up Art first."

"Oh, I say!" he protested.

"And to-morrow I am going to begin taking lessons, but I *will* not call on father for another cent. He shan't be able to throw it in my face that it turned out as he said, and that I was wrong. When he and I dispute it always does turn out as he says—this time it *shan't*."

Archibald laughed a little. The poor fool, don't you know, was so captivated that every word, every action of the girl was music to him. The two weeks of observation had told on her dress. To-

night she wore a white muslin, elaborated with pretty ribbons. She no longer seemed especially rustic to him. He noticed that she was doing her hair now in the prevailing style. "By Jove!" he said to himself, "I'll see that she comes out at the Patriarchs' next winter!"

This was his highest earthly happiness for a *débutante.*

"I am going to make money," she went on; "I am going to paint vases, plates, odds and ends, pot-boilers, you know, and so father shan't know what it costs."

"Oh, by the way, if you do," he pretended, lazily blowing out a ring of smoke, "I happen to know a fellow—an old friend of mine—who gives very fair prices for those sort of things. Now, I am sure he will take any gimcrack you may do."

Somehow the word gimcrack displeased her.

"My art work has always been thought very pretty in East Village," she said. "It would never *sell*, but it was thought pretty. I used to long to help father—and our family is so large, you know, four little brothers and two sisters younger than I am—and now if I only *could* get on, and help father! Oh, Mr. Archibald, you don't know how *little* law there is to go round in East Village!" She heaved a deep sigh.

He tried to appear sympathetic.

"I know a fellow who gets a thousand dollars for a portrait, and he has only just commenced, You can't help but succeed, Miss Price, really!"

She gave him a grateful glance.

"Oh, if I *could!*" she said anxiously. "I taught school one winter, but the pay was so small. And I've tried—you will laugh, Mr. Archibald, at my telling you these things—but I've tried story writing. I was *so* hopeful about it, and it

took as many as ten rejections before I became convinced; and now, if my Art fails me——"

She gave a little fluttering sigh.

"I think you have talent."

"Perhaps it is only enthusiasm——"

"That amounts to the same thing. It will keep you up to your work. They used to tell me I had talent, but I had no enthusiasm, so I dropped it. I wish to encourage you," he added; "I hope you will go on. It takes a lot of work, but you have just the right temperament. You *will* work. You *will* get on, and when you become celebrated, Miss Price, you won't forget your old friends?"

He realized that it was a rather bold step forward, and he trembled for her reply.

"I shall always recommend your house," she said, a little stiffly, making him feel more than ever her aristocratic

superiority to landlords, "and I shall always remember your kindness. We went to at least six boarding houses until we saw your sign—we saw the landladies. Really, Mr. Archibald, you have no idea how vulgar and unartistic *most* of the houses were. There was always a disagreeable odor, as if somebody was frying something. If I do succeed as I wish, and make friends, and get to be known, and all, you may be certain that I shan't forget you. I may organize an Art class, and take the whole house myself!"

He went no further. It was enough to him, as he sat opposite her in his evening dress, his rich opal, set with diamonds, flashing on his white shirt-front, his lawn tie, low shoes, white waistcoat—everything in the latest and most expensive style—it was enough for Mr. Jerome Archibald to sit there and smoke his delicate Havana, and reflect that he at least

had her promise to do what she could to recommend his boarding house!

The next day, at dinner, he again suggested in an offhand way that Miss Price should turn her attention to portait-painting. Miss Perkins seriously objected at once.

"Your father would never give his consent," she said. "There was old Mr. Raymond, who lived on the Poor Farm, because he found portrait-painting didn't pay."

"Mr. Raymond painted dreadful, hideous caricatures," said Elvira, "He painted my mother's portrait, and father is always throwing him in my face. But I don't know. I have no one to begin on except aunt, and I have tried and tried, and I can't get anything but the expression of her spectacles."

Even Aunt Perkins laughed at this a little.

"Begin on me," ventured Archibald.

"Call it the 'Portrait of an Ideal Landlord.'"

There was a little pause. The ladies rose without replying, and Archibald followed them into the drawing room, feeling indefinitely that he had been too forward. As he lit his cigar and sat near an open window, feeling the cool southern breeze, he reflected that it was not improbable that in East Village the only landlord known to them was the keeper of a common tavern. It amused him to think of their primitive, quaint ignorance of city ways. He pictured the small life of East Village, Vt., the narrow social horizon, the strange interest in politics, the religious intolerance, the "strong" views on the temperance question which obtained there, and which leaked out from Miss Perkins as the days went on into August. The easy sense of accommodation to their new surroundings also amused him.

Archibald returned to the portrait.

"I'd rawther like to have one for the dining room," he said. "I think it would interest some of my boarders when they come back next winter. I could give you no end of sittings, Miss Price——"

Elvira exhibited some hesitancy; "Well, I might try," she said. "But I'm not at all good at hair——"

"Shave off my mustache if you like," said the infatuated Archibald, with a grimace.

The ladies changed the subject decorously. It was plain that Archibald's little advances toward an intimacy, to be derived from portrait-painting, were being met in rather an unencouraging spirit, don't you know! The next day he invited them, as an agreeable diversion, to visit Coney Island; but Elvira made an excuse that she had no time for "pleasuring." They seemed, indeed, to have few pleasures. The morning walk in Central Park was given up; Miss Perkins spent

the greater part of the time when Elvira was at the Art School in riding to and fro, apparently, upon street cars. One day she came home very late to dinner, saying that she had discovered the "Belt Line." While waiting her return for dinner, Archibald had an agreeable *tête-à-tête* with Elvira.

IV.

He was growing more and more in love with this self-contained, charming, young New Englander. It had come to a time when he felt that he must speak. They had been at No. 41 now these four weeks, aunt and niece, and yet they had managed to preserve their distance. He was no nearer than the day they arrived.

He reflected that the pleasant little daily comedy which had amused him so entirely would have to be given up the instant he made known to her his state of feeling. But at the same time he felt he could act

out the equivocation no longer. He must, as a gentleman, make a clean breast of his deception. Archibald had seen a great deal of women, and he believed that he understood them pretty well. He believed he understood Miss Price well enough to reckon upon the flattery of her sudden fascination that first day, for him, as the cause of his deceit. He planned to boldly tell her this, one day, while they were waiting for Miss Perkins to revolve around the "Belt Line." But Elvira turned the conversation against his will. She seemed to have remarkable intuitions, this strange creature! Perhaps she had an intuition then. At any rate, she announced their determination to return to East Village the following Saturday.

"Father writes that his ague is no better—that I must come home," she said. "There are, besides, the preserves——"

Archibald expressed no surprise. "If

you go," he said, "I think I'll take a run up there also. I have the greatest curiosity about East Village."

"There is nothing—it is dreadfully—I wouldn't have you visit East Village for all the world!"

"Why?"

"Because—" she replied sedately.

Recognizing this as a sufficient reply, Archibald took a seat on the sofa near her. She was in one of her pretty, soft, white muslins, tied, this evening, with ribbons of the very latest shade of fashionable apple-green. He had noticed the steady growth of fashion in the girl's appearance, but he was not quite prepared for the dozen silver bangles, which jingled as she raised her hands to her hair. She had a pretty arm and hand, and were it not for the bangles, which somehow altered the current of his thought, he had nerved himself up to the point of taking, or trying to take, her

hand in his, and telling her, in a manly way, his story. The bangles, however, diverted him. He could not be serious. He laughed. It was as if he had happened upon a wood nymph in seven-button kid gloves! She misinterpreted his laughter, believing that he intended to ridicule the pastoral delights of East Village.

"I'm not ashamed of Vermont," she said, drawing away a little. "I can't bear to have it laughed at. You would laugh at East Village, Mr. Archibald—you laugh at everything. You are not sincere. You have too much of the city in you—too much of its glitter and——" She caught his eyes directed laughingly upon her bangles, and blushed guiltily.

"Time works its changes, don't you know," he said. "Even you, Miss Elvira, are a *little* affected."

"I hate myself for it," she said. "I *do* find myself growing to like things I never

cared for before. I think of what I have on from morning to night," she confessed guiltily, with an imploring glance at her landlord.

"Can the dead dullness of midsummer in the city have wrought so wondrous a change?" he laughed. "How very gay, really, you will be next winter!"

"Seriously," said Elvira, "I look forward to a visit to East Village as a complete change and rest. When I think of the white, dead walls of our meeting house, I am glad; when I think of the lack of color in everybody up there, it makes me glad; when I think of the plainness of everything, the simpleness, the *truth* of everything, I'm glad to go back. But don't you—don't come up to Vermont, Mr. Archibald. Really, please, don't."

Again Archibald felt impelled to seize the white, pretty hand, and tell his story. He had never come to so intimate a point

before. What chance had he ever to come so near again? All that his mother and sisters could write would have no effect upon him now. All that his friends at the Club would say, all that his Aunt Newbold would say—his Aunt Newbold was the formidable dragon of his family—nothing, he felt sure, would alter his mind. He had deliberated a month, he would deliberate no more. Besides, she was going away; perhaps if he did *not* speak his opportunity would never again occur. He paled a little as he was about to open his lips.

Bother!

The chalk-faced maid entered with a card on a silver tray.

V.

Mr. Jerome Archibald had very few hatreds; people whom he disliked he carefully avoided. Being fastidious to an extreme, he had few friends, but he likewise

had no enemies. He had, however, a certain cousin who lived in Boston, who had in some way early offended him, and for whom he continued to have a most inexplicable dislike. Hunnewell Hollis was a Harvard man, of the extremely disagreeable type, who had been a great swell at college, and who was considered "clevah." He was a year or two older than Archibald, and he usually presumed a little upon his age and upon his superior education. It was Hunnewell Hollis's card which was brought up on the silver tray.

Archibald impatiently rose and went down to the reception room. There he found Hollis walking up and down the room, apparently in some excitement.

"Jerry, this won't do, old man!—heard ladies' voices upstairs! 'Twont do! Lucky I ran down with the yacht. Now I'm going to carry you off with me. By the way, Somers, and Billy Nahant, and

Jack Chadwick are here, and I took the liberty to invite them here over night—knew you were alone—knew you would be glad to put them up."

"By Jove, you do me great honor! Unfortunately I haven't room for you—I've only just let the house—taken. By Jove! I must take in the sign."

Archibald's face betrayed no sign of his justifiable prevarication.

"Well, then, as it is dinner-time I'll stay to dinner with you."

"Sorry, very sorry. But the ladies who have taken the house would think it very odd——"

"Well, how in the devil are *you* dining with them, Jerry?"

"They asked me, in order to discuss the terms. A few details before signing the lease, don't you know!"

"Well it puts me in a rather awkward position; I've left the fellows your address; they'll be here shortly."

"Why don't you head 'em off!" suggested Archibald coolly.

Mr. Hunnewell Hollis gave his cousin a glance of anger. "The whole thing is rather fishy," he said suspiciously. "I trust, Jerry, for the honor of the family——"

Archibald never quite detested his cousin so much before.

"There are a great many adventuresses about, they are on the lookout for rich young men like you, Jerry," and Hunnewell Hollis, giving his cousin a rather gravely serious nod, took up his hat and cane and departed.

Archibald went directly upstairs. He heard a rustle of a dress against the furniture. Had Elvira been listening? He hoped not.

VI.

ADVENTURESS! How that odious word rang in his ears as he entered the room where the sweet primrose face was

still in its corner of the sofa. He swore he would never write to, nor speak to, Hunnewell Hollis again. He had done with him forever. Yet, had he heard the rustle of her dress? It gave him a slightly disagreeable sensation to think that it were possible. Elvira Price apparently had not moved from her seat. She was in the same pretty attitude in which he had left her, leaning back, easily, against the corner of the sofa, her hands crossed in her lap. As he entered it seemed to him that she was studying his face.

"I was so anxious about aunt," she said. "I went out to the stairs thinking I heard her come in. Do you know, it isn't the Belt Line only; she goes to a mission—a boys' mission. She has taken the greatest interest in it; all the teachers have gone away for the summer. It is in an out-of-the-way part of the city, and it worries me."

Archibald hesitated a moment, then he said:

"Did you hear the row with my cousin? He was very impertinent; but all Bostonians are impertinent."

The name Bostonian seemed to give her a slight sensation.

"You have been in Boston?" he asked.

"N—Yes, and I, too, found Bostonians impertinent." She gave him an appealing glance; then she added, after a pause, "I find New York quite different."

Archibald felt amused at this concession.

Miss Perkins came in shortly after, much fatigued, and Archibald after dinner went over to the club, where he fell in with Hunnewell Hollis again, in spite of the fact that he did his best to avoid him. Hunnewell had found his yachting friends, and they had had a very good dinner. They were all very talkative—

Somers, Billy Nahant, and Jack Chadwick. They were in flannel suits and yachting caps, and each was bronzed and sunburned to a fine copper hue.

"What is the name of the people who have taken your house?" asked Hunnewell bluntly, after he had introduced Archibald to his friends.

"Miss Perkins and her niece, Miss Elvira Price," replied Archibald coldly.

Instantly Billy Nahant pricked up his ears. "Why," he said, "isn't she an actress? Didn't she play in Boston last winter?"

"Who?" asked Archibald.

"Why, Elvira Price. She made quite a hit, I believe—her *début* too—at the Boston Theater. She played to crowded houses exactly two weeks; at the end of that time, to everyone's surprise, she went home to Vermont, whence she came, and she calmly gave up the stage forever!"

Archibald's face was a study.

"Did you know you were letting your mother's house to actresses?" asked Hollis, with a sneer.

"Miss Price is probably a different person from the one to whom Mr. Nahant has reference," said Archibald coldly.

"I remember the girl," said Jack Chadwick. "She was very young and beautiful, and fitted her part admirably. She made an excellent *ingénue*. She held herself well—not at all gushing, don't you know—but poetic, *spirituelle*. She played in 'A Scrap of Paper'—some picked-up company with her. She carried the play very well. I have often wondered what became of her."

"So this is the creature who has rented your house, and whom you dined with to-night," sneered Hollis; "an *ingénue*, indeed!"

"Miss Price is a lady—not a 'creature,'" said Archibald haughtily. "As

far as I have seen, she can only honor our house by remaining under its roof." And Archibald bowed stiffly, and took his leave in the midst of an embarrassed silence.

VII.

He preferred not to see Elvira again before she took her departure for Vermont the next day. Her aunt remained in the city to look after her "mission work." Archibald presented her, as the gift of a rich, unknown friend, fifty dollars—their board money—to send some of her boys into the country. After Elvira's departure he became very despondent, Elvira's image was broken to him, and while she had not become in his mind quite an adventuress, yet she had concealed her former life from him. She had deceived him.

But as the days went by and he missed her, he found that he must speak to Miss Perkins about Elvira's acting, or go

through a serious case of nervous prostration. He said very bluntly to her, one day, at dinner:

"So I hear your niece is a great actress."

Miss Perkins gave him a quick, sharp glance.

"She *has* acted," she replied. "But Elvira Price had too much conscience to act *long*."

He gave a sigh of relief.

"She acted in Boston, because she was bound to try it. She wanted to try everything—everything that would keep her father out of the poorhouse and educate the family. But acting, Mr. Archibald, is a dreadful business! As soon as Elvira saw into it a little she quit. The air wasn't pure enough, somehow, for her. Elvira, she needs awful pure air!"

Again Archibald felt a certain glow of satisfaction steal over him.

"Do you know," he said, after a suit-

able pause, "I am more than half-inclined to make her angry by running up to East Village."

Miss Perkins gave a little quinzied laugh of satisfaction. She was beginning to like Archibald very much.

"It would startle Elvira; but she'd be pleased," ventured the thin old maid. "She'd be pleased—in spite of everything!"

A few days later Archibald, after half a day's journey, found himself in Vermont. As the train drew near East Village the mountains grew higher and the scenery wilder. He could see the great August moon roll itself above the high crest of the mountains to the west. Though Archibald was far from superstitious, he was pained to observe that he saw the moon over his left shoulder.

It was late when he stumbled from the steps of the car upon the wooden platform of the station at East Village. It

was dark, also, and to him, extraordinarily cold. He groped his way, shivering, past a blinding reflector, where half a dozen men in cow-hide boots were examining a list of invoices, to what he could dimly outline as the village stage. No one spoke to him, and he found that no one seemed to care whither he, the sole passenger, was carried. He had visions of an unpleasant nature, of being deposited inside the coach in a shed or stable to await the morning. He felt the stage pitch and toss for twenty minutes like a bark upon an angry sea. When all was still again he found that the driver had drawn up before a white-pillared, old-fashioned house, which stood a little back from the street. At the side of the gate a small wooden building bore the sign, which was illuminated by the stage-lamp,

EPHRAIM B. PRICE, ATTORNEY AT LAW.

"Oh," said Archibald, "this is Elvira's house, and the driver is delivering my box of flowers."

He leaned forward, hoping to catch sight of the fair young girl when the front door opened to take in the box. But he was disappointed. The impatient driver had merely left it on the steps of the high, white-pillared portico, after giving the door-bell a vigorous pull.

Then followed a further few minutes of pitching and tossing, and the stage drew up before the tavern-door. A row of a dozen men, whose hats were drawn down over their eyes, and whose feet fell instantaneously from the rail to the floor as the coach drew up, came forward, and one of them betrayed a desire to grasp Archibald's in his own horny hand. "Guess ye'll stop overnight? Th'ain't no other place. 'Sprised to see a stranger to-night, tew. Will you go in an' sign—will you, sir?"

"So this uncouth ruffian," thought Archibald, "is Elvira's ideal landlord! No wonder she distrusts me!"

"We're local temp'rance," said the landlord. "An' no licker's been seen to East Village for nigh six years. Not a drop, sir, an' it's bustin' my ho-tel higher'n a kite. Yes, it is!"

Archibald expressed commiseration.

"As I tell'd Squar' Price, 'yeou high-toned, 'ristocratic temp'rance folk'll hurt East Village when ye close the hotel!' Why, when a gent comes up here fr' the city, he wants to be able to call fer a glass o' gin or a glass o' whisky 's often 's he likes."

Archibald thought he detected the faint smell of liquor upon the landlord's breath as he talked, and it occurred to him that his obtrusively free-and-easy manner was the result of a secret violation of the prohibitory local license law. "Bein' fr' the city, as you be," said the

landlord, lowering his voice to a whisper, and placing his heavy hand on Archibald's shoulder familiarly, "I calc'late you're cold an' ready for a tidy drink. I calc'late I'm talkin' to a gent as is used ter lickerin' up, even ef 'tis again the law?" To humor him, Archibald admitted that he had no stringent prohibitory sentiments,

"Well then, good! Jest you foller me!"

Archibald followed the landlord out into the hotel yard, where the latter pulled up the flaps of a cellar-door. Hearing the creaking sound, and taking it for an admonitory signal, the row of men on the hotel piazza, who had resumed their seats, again dropped their feet on the floor, rose, and came out into the yard in Indian file in perfect silence. Archibald followed his landlord down into the darkness of the cellar, where, beneath the dim light of a solitary

candle, he perceived a cask with a wooden spigot, and near it half a dozen tin cups. The men filed down the steps behind him. "You've heerd o' apple jack?" asked the landlord in a whisper.

Archibald nodded.

"Drink that, then!" and the landlord handed him a cupful of the beverage. It was enough to intoxicate him. He drank but a very little; as he saw the other men were waiting, he passed the cup on to them.

"Welcome to East Village, stranger," said one of the men, drinking. "Be you up 'ere a-sellin' marchandize?"

"Oh, no!"

"Be you come to see the Squar'?"

"Well—perhaps—yes."

"Wa'l, this is a dead give away!" and the men laughed noisily, as rustics will. "Don't mention this 'ere cider to Squar' Price!"

The next morning was delicious, the air clear and smelling of the mountains. The mist hung above the distant river, and a line of hills showed their green wooded outline above it. As Archibald breathed the sweet country air, he stepped more briskly, felt less of his city malaria, drew into his lungs a long breath of the fresh, invigorating summer wind, which seemed to come to him across the high upland, from such a vast distance.

He came to the old colonial gate and entered. The Hon. Ephraim B. Price was just at the moment sauntering down the gravel path from his house to his law office. As he saw Archibald enter, he came forward somewhat more rapidly. He was a man of large frame, gaunt rather than spare, of prominent cheek-bones, of lengthy chin-beard. His eyes were very keen, and his entire expression was one of patient alertness—as if there

was very little to be alert over, but a deep necessity of keeping up a reputation. Archibald learned afterward how indefatigable a partisan, and how strenuous a believer in the Republican party the Hon. Ephraim was.

"Sir," he said, after greeting Archibald, and looking with a grin of pity upon his engraved card—a grin directed chiefly to the "Mr." before Archibald's name—"you are Elvira's landlord down in New York—tell me, how is your city and State going, do you think?"

Archibald felt taken aback. Politics were something of which he knew nothing. He was but barely aware that it was a presidential year. In the city he kept severely out of politics, as hardly the employment of gentlemen.

"I—I—think it will go Democratic."

A more violent frown than before. "If I thought so, sir; if I imagined so; if for one instant I believed that what we

fought for during the war—— Eh, Elvira? Here is Mr. Archibald!"

Then the Hon. Ephraim turned abruptly and entered his office, where, it may be added, he sat for the next hour, his feet on the cold stove before him, meditating where his next fee was to come from, and breaking out with an occasional invective against the wicked Democracy.

Before the old gentleman was a square window which looked out over the town. All day long he sat before this, as upon a watch tower—a censor of village morals and deportment.

"Father is so interested in the election," apologized Elvira. "But how strange to see you here; and I told you not to!"

She held a small gray kitten in her arms, which she stroked slowly. She was still in his favorite white muslin, and she had a gentle, sweet flush of pleasure in her face.

"She Held a Small Gray Kitten in Her Arms, which She Stroked Slowly." *Page* 132.

"I came, Miss Price—because—don't you know—I—aw—missed you," and he smiled.

"You are very good. How is Aunt Perkins? Did she bring her mission boys to your house? She has written that a friend of yours has given fifty dollars for the boys. Do tell me about it. Is she well? Have any more boarders come?"

She plied him with questions as they strolled toward the white-pillared portico. The house was old and shabby, but he did not notice it. The place was run down and impoverished, but it seemed very beautiful to him, for he noticed that she wore one of his roses in her lustrous hair.

Entering the hallway he met some of the younger brothers and sisters, and felt a sudden strange affection spring up in his heart for them. Elvira took him through into a gloomy parlor, lined with

plain hair-cloth furniture. On the walls were several portraits. "This was my mother," said the girl affectionately, pointing to what Archibald felt to be a hideous daub, a red-faced woman in black, against a green background. It was the portrait by Mr. Raymond, whose abode was now the poorhouse. "She died only two years ago——"

"I fancy if she had lived," said Archibald, "you would not have tried—the stage?"

She looked at him calmly a moment.

"That Boston man has told you?"

"Yes, I learned the fact from his friends."

"I shall never—again." There was a despairing pathos in her voice.

"Elvira," he said slowly, "as I see it—I think it was very noble of you to try."

Then, unaccountably to him, she burst into tears.

"It is what I love—what I long for—to be an actress—a great actress," she sobbed. "But I can't—I can't! I can't exist with those creatures—those horrible men who hang about you! No one knows what I endured! No one knows what, too, I gave up when I left the stage and came home; but I *had* to."

He leaned forward in sympathy.

"You may say what you will, but there is no Art like acting, and nothing so fine as applause. Oh, that I could bring myself to do it—to be strong enough to do it—to save our fortunes—to help father. You little know how I have suffered, Mr. Archibald."

"By Jove—I—I quite like you for it!"

He was on his feet at her side. Impulsively he bent down and whispered close to her ear. "Let me be your audience the rest of my life! Act for *me*—let me applaud everything—any-

thing you do, my darling! always! always!"

She put him away.

"I don't feel I have acted just right *with* you," she said. "I should have told you that I was—or might be again—an actress." She spoke coldly. "I don't believe you want them in your boarding house. They are not always desirable, I believe!" Elvira's eyes were fastened on the floor.

Archibald paced to and fro in the parlor. "Confound her odd New England conscience!" he muttered to himself. Seizing her hands, he cried passionately, "I, too, must confess. Elvira, I loved you that first day you came. *I loved you!* Therefore I let you think—it *was* a boarding house."

She looked at him aghast a moment. "And it isn't—it's your own private—oh, Mr. Archibald!"

She sat and looked at him with a hor-

rified stare. The full truth of his imposition began to steal upon her gradually. Then her face fell and she averted it, as she felt that a fatal untruth had come between them. She rose quietly and left him standing near her. She went upstairs to her room and threw herself upon her bed in an agony of tears.

Through it all Archibald had merely smiled!

VII.

But when she left him he felt rather weak for a moment, as if his city malaria had returned upon him with a double force. As Elvira showed no signs of returning, he amused himself by turning over the leaves of the family photograph album. Face by face revealed the stern, set, arid, Puritan features, the hard, determined chins, and the "firmness" which, in the person of the Hon. Ephraim, he felt still dominated and controlled the

public affairs of East Village. He threw down the album with a feeling of impotent rage against the survival of this colonial "narrowness," as he liked to call it. He walked out of the house and wandered, much crestfallen and full of malaria, along the village street toward the hotel. A great many farm wagons were tied along the sidewalk, and there were numbers of fresh-cheeked country girls walking in threes and fours, and sweeping the sidewalk as they went. Upon a slight elevation stood a white wooden meeting house, with a white steeple, and it gave him a chill even on that warm morning to look at it—it *looked* so cold. Small groups of hard-featured farmers in fur caps stood on the corners of the streets discussing, presumably, the crops. He wondered if the fur caps were needed in that arid, bleak region to keep warm the native's sense of Right and Wrong? He made his way

out, beneath some beautiful elms, into a small, old-fashioned burying-ground, where he discovered that "erring sinners" apparently comprised the only element of those who were requested to "*Pause and Read.*" Feeling himself to be now, for some reason, a distinctly immoral person, he read some of the quaint epitaphs, to which he was invited, in a spirit of humility, which presently changed to amusement. In death, as in life, the hard, stern old village characters preserved on their headstones a fund of grim humor for the "sinner," which in Archibald's instance made him smile. "Oh," he sighed to himself, "I long to take her away from all this sort of thing—forever!"

He took a long walk in the afternoon, and returned to the hotel to find a coldly worded note from Elvira, inviting him around to tea. He removed the stains of his walk, and dressed himself with his

usual care. He found Elvira waiting for him beneath the high white pillars, in an unbecoming, and as it seemed to him, forbidding, dress of black. Her face seemed unusually stern and relentless. There were traces of tears in her red eyelids, but the tears were dried away now, and her eyes were very bright and hard.

"Don't say anything *now*. Father feels very deeply about it. We have had a long talk. When he heard of the—of the unfortunate house affair—he was *so* angry I could hardly pacify him."

Archibald's heart sank within him. He fairly shivered.

"He said that he did not want me to lower my standard," continued Elvira, in her clear, musical, passionless voice. "And I told him that he need have no fears. I wanted to see you first, and tell you. Let us not have any *feeling* about it."

"Any *feeling!*" exclaimed Archibald. "Why—how can we help it?"

"Let us act as if we had never understood one another. I will go back to the city with you, and Aunt Perkins and I will find some other place at once."

"Go back with me—and expect me to show no feeling! Elvira, this is preposterous!"

"Then I will go back alone." She compressed her lips, just as he had observed her father do.

"I beg pardon, Elvira, do you mean—can you mean that I can never—I can never hope?"

She nodded her pretty flower-like head gravely. "Come in to tea, won't you?" she said coolly. "I want father to hear you talk about Art. You need not fear he will allude to the boarding house."

He turned on his heel. At last he too was angry.

"Thanks, awfully," he said. "But if I

go back to the hotel now, I shall just have time to pack my valise and catch the evening train. So good-by!"

He walked rapidly away, leaving her standing upon the white-pillared portico, looking, with pure, sweet, upturned face, like a saint who has for all time renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil. Had he looked back, Mr. Jerome Archibald's tender heart would have been touched by her attitude; he would have returned, and, against her will, clasped her in his arms and covered her pale lips with warm kisses. It might have melted her high "standard" a little. He did not take the evening train, but he let a night intervene without seeing her, and the entering wedge of her high sense of duty did its work before morning. He determined to remain another day and make a further trial. When he called the next day she was obdurate. "Love cannot be built upon deceit and untruth,"

she said sententiously. "I was not frank; you were not. It is better that we should part. I could never hold up my head—I could never face the world. I know what they would call me. They would call me an *adventuress!* and they would hate me for being successful. Yes—your mother, your sisters—everyone."

"But you were perfectly innocent about it, Elvira."

There was a little pause.

"I, too, was innocent. I meant no more than to have you near me, where I could learn to know you—love you—and now, really, it seems as if you had built up a mountain of ice between us, don't you know."

She merely shook her head.

When Archibald returned to the city, his malaria compelled him to go away again almost immediately to Newport. There, a few weeks later, his agent wrote

him that he had succeeded in renting the house "at an exorbitant figure to a very rich tenant without children"—thus fulfilling his mother's conditions to the letter. He went back to the city, recovered in health, to pack up a few personal effects, and found to his surprise that Miss Perkins and her niece were, at the moment he arrived, in the house. They had taken board on Ninth Street, and had gone up to take a last look of the charming interior where, Elvira guiltily acknowledged, life had been "so wrongly pleasant." He found Elvira holding a fan in her hand and seated pensively in an old Venetian chair in what was formerly her studio. As he entered the room, she rose, blushing a most vivid red, and as rapidly turning pale again.

"Mr. Archibald!" she exclaimed. "I did not know you were in the city!"

"I have been here only an hour," he said stiffly.

"It is time for us to go;" and she turned to the door.

"Elvira!" His face looked sick and ghastly.

"Well?" She drew herself up very coldly.

"Are you made of stone?"

"Mr. Archibald, what can you mean?"

"My child, you are capable of grinding one who loves into powder—like—er—a millstone!"

"Aunt Perkins," she called out, "let us go!"

"No," he cried, "I will not let you go, You shall hear me! I love you! Do you hear? And you shall not leave this house until you say you will be my wife! I know you care for me—everything tells me so—but you will wear your own and my heart out with your hard, cruel conscience! What brought you here? *You loved me!* Why have you been sitting in

this room? You love me, Elvira—I know it—I feel it!"

Gently he drew her to him and kissed her. She laid her head on his shoulder and breathed a little contented sigh. "*I don't think this—is right!*" she said.

PATRIOTISM.

I.

THE last day of May, in the city, began with very great heat in the early morning, and was then relieved by a shower which had the effect of increasing the humidity. Toward noon the air, laden with moisture, lay like a heavy pall over the streets, and the sun beat fiercely through it as if to remind the old warriors, on the march, of their Virginia battlefields. For an hour the Decoration Day parade had been passing the Grantleys' house, with the bands, the drums and fifes, and the carriages. In the torrid heat the din seemed almost unbearable. It was the one regret of the Grantleys in living on Fifth Avenue that it was always the "show" street. They

never seemed to be left in quiet. At the Centennial parade of two days they had wisely closed the house and gone into the country. When the not entirely mournful strains of the Decoration Day procession burst upon them, they endeavored to make the din a little more endurable by shutting the front windows, closing the blinds, and opening the low French casements in the rear of the house. Here, a balcony covered with a low awning looked down upon a little paved courtyard, in which a fountain was playing. On either side abundant ivy climbed the shadowed wall; in porcelain jars were some curious Indian plants; the outlook was sufficiently cool and refreshing—the noises of the street came to them only in a distant and subdued echo.

On a wide rug-covered divan at one end of the balcony two ladies were sitting, watching the quaint performances of a diminutive Javanese spaniel—a

precious little beast—whose owner, a young man, was engaged in putting through his paces. The little dog could do almost everything but talk. His master gave him his orders in French—and French being thus, as it were, established as the order of the morning, the ladies fell to conversing in it, admired the little dog in it—and flattered its master—a pale, delicate, and rather affected youth with the negligent long hair and pointed beard of a Parisian artist or literateur—with a precision and readiness the result of many seasons abroad.

"'His jags' is not quite himself this morning," said the young man, smothering a yawn. "He suffers with the rest of us——"

"He isn't used to our American parades—was he not frightened as you carried him through the streets? Poor little beast! Never mind, they don't—

do they—march back again down the Avenue?"

The lady who spoke looked up with a horrified glance, fanning herself leisurely.

"Don't tell me we are to be shut in all the afternoon!" exclaimed the other peremptorily. "Willie Langdon—tell us that they don't march down again!"

Young Langdon opened his eyes widely, then half closed them. "How do I know?" he said; "I haven't been in New York at the height of the London season, now, these three years."

"Lila might know."

"Where is Lila?" asked Willy Langdon drowsily. "She must be quite a young lady by this time."

The ladies, mother and daughter, looked at one another, amused. "Lila is still such a child!" laughed the elder. "But she would know!"

"I thought you boasted once of your

absolute control over your sister, Mrs. Fontaine?"

The younger of the two ladies, a handsome young widow of thirty, who had ceased to mourn the departure of her husband, replied: "I can control her generally; she is very docile, but to-day we fought all through breakfast——"

"Ah?"

"She is such a young American! It's very odd; she seems to have a pride of country! Mamma, is she not incorrigible?"

Mrs. Grantley threw up her hand with a despairing gesture. "She will have her way," she said. "She is upstairs now—in the garret. I fancy she is unfurling a flag, or doing something equally ridiculous."

Mrs. Fontaine laughed. "When one is young, one will have one's enthusiasms. I can barely remember the war. I remember my father's saying that Lee

had surrendered, and his taking me up and kissing me. I must have been the merest child."

"Unable to talk," said Willy Langdon gallantly.

Mrs. Fontaine hardly noticed him. She continued, as she swept her white feathery fan to and fro, "I am surprised that Lila should seem to care so, because she has only heard of the war in history, at school, and the history of the war seems to me particularly stupid——"

"A history of mere onslaughts of armed mobs," said Langdon, repeating the usual European criticism. "So Lila is enthusiastic!"

"Oh, very! She intends to drag mamma, if she can, this afternoon to hear an oration in Brooklyn!"

Willy Langdon stared, then burst out laughing.

"I fancy she will have a hard time persuading me," laughed Mrs. Grantley

amiably. "The coachman has absolutely refused to let the horses stir out to-day."

"Mamma, you always do the least thing she asks," said Mrs. Fontaine correctingly.

"I will make a stand at orations."

Langdon bent down and smoothed the soft, glossy hair of the little toy dog. "We wish we were well out of it, don't we, Jags? Give us London—eh, Jags? or better, give us Mme. la Countesse du Chailleur's pretty chateau near Fontainebleau." He sat up, lifting the dog on his knees. "She has a mile walk between fragrant hedges of roses. She has a lover's maze planned by Louis XVI., and one of his own handmade chairs in the central bower—a sweet *place pour deux*. I felt the place deeply and wrote a sonnet there. It will bring me five pounds, I hope."

At the moment they heard someone

come hurrying downstairs, apparently at full speed. Willy Langdon, who loved to talk only of himself, looked annoyed at the interruption.

"Lila!" laughed Mrs. Grantley in wonder, as her youngest daughter came rushing in to them, then paused on the threshold.

II.

Framed in the low French window, breathless with her speedy descent, and dragging behind her an American flag, which somehow had wound itself partly around her shoulders, and set off the luxurious beauty of her wavy hair, stood Lila—her face in a glow of excitement, and her blue eyes showing traces of tears. It was evident that she had intended girlishly to throw herself upon her mother's shoulder in a tragic abandon, but the presence of a strange young man had brought her to a full stop.

In addition to her unusual beauty, Lila's face was enthused with a high ethereal sweetness, a fervency of youthful ardor. There was no sense of weariness in this rare face, nor no pilot or governor except impulse. But there, stamped in her face as upon the face of a poet, stood out her one great passion—patriotism.

Not alone was it suggested in the beautiful colors of the flag draped about her white dress. To her the name and fame of America was as dear as her home; she hugged the flag up like a mother! The militia hardly won her; they were only possible heroes, good soldier boys, pretty darlings—but not for her young heroic heart! Passing below her upper window, where her clear eyes could glance up and down the great avenue, she had beheld that remnant of other days—that stately march past of the Grand Army; these were men—bat-

tle-scarred. Her soul rushed back to the days before she lived—the heroic times which were no more.

Langdon rose, surveyed her with critical admiration an instant, his head on one side, and extended his hand.

"You have often heard us speak of Mr. Langdon," said her mother. "He has been abroad three years."

With the strangest self-repression, this young creature of sixteen sedately extended to him the tips of her fingers, then turned away. "Mamma," she said, "the veterans are marching past now." Her voice quivered. "Some of them have only one arm, some are lame—and—and—the dangerously wounded and the dying are being borne in carriages——"

"The wounded, dear, the dying? They must have recovered by this time!" and her mother began to laugh.

Even Langdon smiled as he resumed

his seat. Lila was very serious. "Oh, to think what they have gone through for us! I could not look at them. I—I—shut my eyes!"

Lila looked down in an odd confusion. Then, observing the little dog, stooped down impulsively and caught him up and pressed him to her bosom. As the dog whined and Langdon seemed to look anxious for his pet, she set him down again quickly. The effort sent the fresh warm blood into her face. She glowed a charming color, then briefly relapsed into a soft white.

"Little dogs generally like me," she said, as if piqued.

"He has been made terribly nervous by this dreadful parade," said Langdon apologetically. "I'm rather sorry I brought him. I thought he might be amusing, you know; his tricks often make quite a hit. Shall he perform for you, Miss Lila?"

"Yes. I want Lila to see what he can do. Make him do a somersault," said Mrs. Grantley.

"I'm afraid I can't wait," said Lila hesitatingly. Langdon was of the genus "Young man," and she was arrived at the age to be somewhat afraid of a new specimen, of whom she had heard much as a rising artist and literary man. She made an excuse that she had come downstairs for a piece of string, and she caught the flag up on her arm quickly, and departed almost as suddenly as she came.

"She is wild over her veterans," said Mrs. Fontaine, amused at her young sister. "She is such a child! But it is the same with many of her school friends. They seem to be, this young generation, so interested in all our national affairs. I can't understand it; it wasn't so in *our* day. It's quite new. It's something they get at their schools, I suppose. Why, Lila has the Revolution and the

War of 1812 at her tongue's end. She actually says she hates England!" and Mrs. Fontaine made a wry face.

"Oh, I think she will outgrow that," remarked her mother casually, as if it were some youthful deformity.

Presently there was a ring at the electric door-bell, and a number of ladies, who had been asked to an informal lunch, came in. Mrs. Grantley and Mrs. Fontaine received them on the cool balcony, and disposed them in an admiring circle about Willy Langdon and his amusing dog. The young artist was in his element beneath the appreciative glances of a circle of women, and the pretty Miss Ravenswood, and her sister Mrs. Johnes, made much of the young artist and of "Jags." The last named lady bewailed the frequent recurrence of national holidays. She was a bright, black-eyed young woman with always a great deal to say. She usually managed to monopolize the

conversation, as she did now. "George," she said, alluding to her husband, "has gone down to his fishing club on Long Island, leaving poor me to the trumpets and bass drums. I don't complain. I ordered all the shades pulled down, and sent for a special watchman, who, I suppose, is now engaged in gorging himself with the servants in the kitchen! There are so many rough people in the streets. We nearly lost our lives getting to your house. They were all applauding the veterans—for my part I don't see much to applaud in them. George says they're all 'pension grabbers' and are living on the government."

"The crowds are simply terrible," added Miss Ravenswood seriously, "I hardly dared venture. Several families have encamped on our front stoop, and there they sit, wave flags and eat sandwiches and hard boiled eggs, as if perfectly at home. I expected Major Beau-

champs all the morning—but of course he didn't venture to come——"

"Oh, he found the crowd too great, of course," said Mrs Johnes. Then she added innocently, "but I should suppose he was rather used to processions, being in the British army——"

Everyone smiled, and Mrs. Johnes made a momentary wondering pause, then swiftly went on. "We met him on the yacht last winter in Bermuda, you know. He's on his way to England. Some day he will be Lord Wortley. Do make your little dog perform, Mr. Langdon! I wish you would teach my dog—but Adolphus refuses to be taught anything amusing or useful. He never will mind, and perhaps I didn't begin early enough. They say you must begin very early with babies, animals, and husbands—I never began at all with George, so he leaves me now to endure the processions, and if it were not for you, dear

Mrs. Grantley, the day would be tiresome enough. One cannot drive, of course. Luckily one is in Newport on the 'Glorious Fourth,' and one's children and firecrackers can be sent off to the stables—but May 30th is an awkward day for me—in the midst of packing. It's such a relief to come into this great cool house, and breathe."

The conversation became general, and it fell upon Lila's "peculiarities." There was much laughter at her patriotic feeling. There was also a deprecatory air in the allusions to the holiday and its sadly solemn motive. One lady asked if the Grand Army of the Republic was not an order of the Masonic fraternity? It was the general impression among the ladies that it was not wise to perpetuate the memory of the Civil War, which, after all, they said, was but an internecine struggle over the paltry question of negro slavery.

A servant passed around some cooling beverage on a silver tray, and presently lunch was announced. Everyone became very much interested in Mrs. Johnes's description of Major Percy Beauchamps—who would in time be Lord Wortley. It was such an opportunity for Fanny Ravenswood! Would she make a dead set for him? Would he do more than delay over one steamer on his way to England? Miss Ravenswood was rather quiet—she preferred ordinarily to make a subdued, but richly handsome background for her lively sister—but it was very evident that her mind was upon the gallant British officer, and that she speculated upon the success of his efforts to battle with the crowd in order to reach her. Would he follow her over to the Grantley's? She had reason to know that he was very brave. Mrs. Johnes told the story at lunch of his rescuing two men from drowning, when

they were at Bermuda. But was he brave enough to follow her—and commit himself? If he did present himself that day, she had it in her mind to get him off alone on some very vulgar steamboat excursion—say to Staten Island—and there in the solitude of a large crowd of common people extract an avowal! Decoration day with its noise and processions should be made of some use to her, forsooth, in carrying out her plans.

The elaborate lunch, with Willy Langdon wearisomely doing the honors at one end of the handsomely decorated table, and Mrs. Grantley at the other, had now passed with the smooth perfection of efficient service into the region of ice and ices. Lila Grantley had not appeared, and it was laughingly admitted by her mother that it was more than probable she was on the Avenue somewhere, with a maid, following the procession. There was a great deal of merriment

over this. Langdon became very jocose over it. He remarked that she would make a most charming *vivandière.* The laughter served to fill up what seemed to Mrs. Grantley an inordinately long period of time in the service of the coffee. What gave her a still greater sense of uneasiness, she thought she heard sounds of a disturbing character below stairs. The uneasiness fairly approached consternation when Thomas, the fat, solemn butler, came hurriedly into the room and announced in an awful whisper, "Mum—they're carryin' in a dead body downstairs—spite of all I can do? Yes'm, a dead body!"

"A dead body?" exclaimed Mrs. Grantley, rising.

"A dead body?" cried Mrs. Fontaine, in her peremptory way. "Willy Langdon, go down and see?"

Langdon turned very pale. He detested personal encounters, and he

imagined that there was a disagreeable row of some sort among the servants below stairs to be suppressed. It is the one unpleasant feature of being the only man among a set of admiring ladies that, when emergencies arise, he is at once shouldered with all the responsibility. Willy Langdon hardly felt himself equal to the occasion. He sank back in his chair with a discouraging appearance of helplessness. To add to the confusion, little Jags began to bark in a shrill key. "Call a policeman," said Langdon feebly. "Whose dead body is it?"

The instinctive feeling that it might be that of Mr. Grantley, a gentleman of portly habit, whose physician had often warned her of a possible sudden apoplectic demise, and who had gone down to his club that morning, sent their hostess off, at once, into a dead faint. Mrs. Johnes fell prone on a sofa in a sympathetic syncope, with a cry that her "George" had

been drowned while fishing. The other ladies present clasped hands in consternation and bestowed deadly glances upon the pusillanimous Langdon, who, thus admonished, pushed the fat butler before him, and unsteadily made his way downstairs with Miss Ravenswood and Mrs. Fontaine, while the fainting ladies were slowly brought around by a vigorous administration of smelling salts.

III.

WHILE the lunch was in progress in the cool dining room of the Grantley mansion, in the blistering sun, on the sidewalk, a different scene was being enacted.

A veteran, an old man, had been overcome by the heat. He had tottered out of his line, on the march, and had fallen just across the gutter. In falling he had struck his head, and the blood had spattered down over his fatigue uniform, and over his badges and honorable orders,

which he wore on his left breast. Instantly as he fell, the man in the rank just behind him gave a cry, and ran to his assistance. A policeman drove the crowd back with his club and pulled the stricken veteran up on the sidewalk, where he lay gasping.

"Capt'n! Capt'n!" cried the comrade kneeling at his side, while the pitying crowd surged around the fallen man, and the policeman signaled for an ambulance.

"Capt'n Stagg! It's me—Yagers o' de Forty-fust—Yagers!"

But the stricken man gave no reply. The comrade Yagers stood up—he was a middle-aged German with a sprinkling of gray in his beard. "Oh, vere's de am'lance?" he cried, wringing his trembling hands helplessly. A kind-hearted woman gave him her umbrella to hold over the face of the prostrated soldier. At that moment a handsome tall young man elbowed his way through the crowd.

From the businesslike way in which he went to work, they at once called him "doctor." He opened the veteran's collar, disclosing a small locket hung round his neck on a black ribbon. He chafed his hands. "I was used to this thing in India," he said to the officer. "We've got to get ice on this man's head soon, or he'll die on our hands."

"Kape back there!" bawled the policeman to the crowd. "Ah, there's a lady o' the house callin'. What is't? Fetch him in? Ketch hold there, docther—an' you, hie, Yagers? Don't luk so doom, man—The airy way? All right—now—lift um, he's not heavy. Sure that gal's a daisy! She says fetch him in, an' it's on Fifth Avenue we are,—an't it's better for him, see? till the ambulan' comes. Will yez kape back? Do yez want fer to kill the man?" he bawled to the crowd.

It was the work of a moment to bear the limp body of Captain Stagg into the

basement of the Grantley house. Lila, her face beaming with pity and anxiety, held open the door and ordered the frightened servants about like a drill sergeant. She had some difficulty with Thomas the butler, and the French *chef*, who objected to having his domain so ruthlessly invaded. But she sent Thomas flying upstairs with a reprimand, and threatened to discharge M. Frascati *instanter*.

The veteran was laid out on a comfortable lounge in the servants' room, and pounded ice quickly placed on his head. Brandy was procured. As Lila stood holding the bottle, she had leisure to observe the good-looking young doctor, whose timely arrival had probably saved the old veteran's life. He seemed to her to have more the military air than a doctor's bearing. His commands were quick, sharp, to the point. Lila, he treated with no distinction whatever—she

delighted in the way she was ordered about. How efficient this young man was! Yagers was kept at work with a fan at the veteran's head. A servant was bidden to rub his feet. The doctor himself chafed his hands. Ah, that doctor! Lila suddenly, fleetingly, felt that she would like to be commanded by him for all time!

"So you have practiced mostly in India?" she ventured, for he had spoken of his experience with sunstroke there.

"Entirely in India—never heard of a sunstroke in Bermuda, where I've been for three years. Now, then,—a drop of brandy, please——"

"And you—you think he won't die?"

"I know he won't. He's breathing better. Now, Yagers, you seem to know this man well; has he been ill lately?"

Yagers gave a gulp. "Him and me, sir, was in de War—four years togedder. He's my capt'n, sir. Him an' me since

de War has mostly been togedder, sir. Ve always marched togedder. He vas nebber sick before to my knowletch, but he's not strong now, he doesn't get about much. Ve is in de coal peezniz on Sevent' Avenue. Everyvun knows Capt'n Stagg. He vas right honorable man. He vas brave. Ve has been in some hard battles. He vas badly wounded twice, but he—he never vould take no pension, and so I—I vas vounded too—I never took no pension. Ve needer take pensions."

The doctor gravely dipped the end of a towel in a basin of water, and as carefully as he could wiped the blood from the veteran's coat and orders. These he looked at a moment, half enviously. The bronze eagle, the order of the Army of the Potomac, the Loyal Legion button, the G. A. R. badge, a special medal for bravery—he handled them a moment delicately, and then said gravely :

"I'm not a doctor—I'm a soldier, too. That march past of these real war heroes, old now, and feeble many of them—too feeble to march through these torrid streets—but feeling the old spirit moving within them—loving that beat of the drum—loving their country—it thrilled me! This man is a soldier. He ought not to have marched to-day, but he could not help himself. He—oh, I know how he felt! It's the same spirit of patriotism all over the world—all over the world!"

The tears rose in Lila's blue eyes, for the young soldier spoke with serious, reverent feeling. Who was he? What was this young man? Lila felt in her soul that she responded fully to his feeling—his admiration for this old war hero—and he must be a hero too!

Suddenly the old veteran convulsively sat up, stared about the room, then seemed to wander in his mind hysterically.

"Capt'n! My capt'n!" cried Yagers. "Don't you know me—Yagers?"

But Captain Stagg merely stretched out his bony fingers, crying, "On, boys! Don't mind me. I've been stunned, that's all. Forward now, boys! Up the hill! Chase the Johnnies out of the woods! Where's my sword, corporal? Eh? Wounded? Never mind me. Forward, forward, I say! an' lick em' to h—l!"

Yagers stood up excitedly. "It's old Shiloh over again—ven my capt'n vas vounded in de head! Vere he lay all vun night in de rain sore vounded. I see it zo plain! De trees, de eart' works by de fort, de shells crashin' in de forest, de leedle stream all runnin' mit blood, an' my capt'n, as he fell into de new plowed ground by de road, and de rebels firin' from de voods above, an' dose very vords he used! Toonder und blitzen, it is strange; how he goes back wandering in his mind now!"

At that moment the room was invaded by some of the ladies from above stairs. Mrs. Fontaine, followed by Miss Ravenswood, pressed forward. Willy Langdon, with several ladies, brought up the rear by the door. Not even the presence of a very sick man could repress Miss Ravenswood from rushing upon Major Beauchamps with an exclamation of astonishment. She extended her hand to him and advanced beaming with smiles. Major Beauchamps surprised her dreadfully, by nodding curtly, and then waving her back authoritatively, and pressing his finger to his lips to command silence. "This is a very serious case," he whispered, "a brother soldier. The fewer in this room, the better just now." Then he said, in a louder voice, "Ladies, I beg you to retire."

To be asked to retire, in her own house, by an entire stranger, struck Mrs. Fontaine as rather peculiar. She assumed

all the dignity she was capable of, and asked in lofty and icy tones: "Lila, who is this sick man? What are you doing here with all these strange men? Who permitted him to be brought in here? I'm sure mamma will be very angry."

"I believe at one time I had the pleasure of Major Beauchamps' acquaintance!" exclaimed Miss Ravenswood, as freezingly as she could manage, in the excitement of the moment, to express herself. "But how he came to be here, or why he assumes so much authority in my friend's house, I do not know."

The major hardly noticed her. He was again on his knees before the old veteran, feeding him with some of the best of Grantley brandy from one of the old Dutch Grantley silver teaspoons. Lila, looking very serious, forcibly but silently pushed her sister, Miss Ravenswood, and all the rest out of the room

and closed the door, then stood leaning against it, arms akimbo.

"So you are Major Beauchamps!" she exclaimed. "An English soldier?"

"Yes. Why not?" he asked mechanically, as he dosed the veteran with another drop of brandy.

"And we've whipped you twice—twice!"

She seemed to glory in taunting him. She was exquisitely pretty, and inexpressibly girlish and saucy as she stood there. In spite of everything he burst out into half suppressed laughter, then sternly controlled himself.

"We'll talk of that later Miss, Miss——"

"Lila Grantley."

"Miss Lila, and now I think we've been fortunate, and got the best of the sun this time. Captain Stagg's pulse is regular, and he's taken to sleeping. Yagers, you go to the hospital with him?"

"I—I'll never leave my captain, sir——"

"Well, here's a sov——"

Major Beauchamps felt his purse, then hesitated, glancing at Lila, who shook her head scornfully. "This isn't England," she said.

"I beg your pardon, Yagers," was all the major said, and shortly after the ambulance arrived, and they carried the now sleeping veteran of many battles gently out through the door, through the area way to the street. Lila and the British officer were left alone in the room.

IV.

"Now we'll talk about the Revolution and '1812,'" laughed Major Beauchamps, "unless you prefer to have me go upstairs and be first duly presented to your mother."

"No," said Lila firmly, "we may as

well have it out right here—do you admit that we have beaten you twice—and that you are very sorry about the *Alabama?*"

"As for the Revolution," he replied quite as firmly, with a merry twinkle in his eye, "that war was fought out in the English House of Commons, not on American soil. In 1812 we won as many sea fights as you, Miss Lila Grantley. And as for the *Alabama*—pish; we've paid you twice over for *her* doings! To be sure it was, I admit, only after you had gotten judgment and issued an execution."

"Well, I like that!" she replied warmly. "You mean you could have beaten General Washington if Parliament had let you; that we didn't gain our point in 1812, and that, because you settled up our *Alabama* claims, that the wrong was fully atoned. Well!"

The major burst out laughing. "Oh,

come!" he said kindly, "we can't quarrel over bygones. Let us admit at once that England and her daughter are the only countries worth loving—and being wounded and dying for—let us keep it all in the family! Let us try to be leaders in civilization together—let us further the ends of justice together—let us keep the peace of the world—together!"

Lila looked at him a moment, then softened. "On these terms," she said, with a sedate manner, "I consent to go upstairs and see what they will say."

"Will they be angry?"

"Mamma will be very angry, at first, then she will calm down and—and—if I kiss her, and pretend to cry, she will do anything. I can even make her do things she hates. She hates orations—and I love them. There is one in Brooklyn, this afternoon."

By the most singular intuition, the

major begged to be taken to Brooklyn to hear it.

"Perhaps," whispered Lila, as they made their way upstairs; "but we'll wait and see how angry mamma is, first."

It seemed as if now the girl was suddenly overcome with a species of stage fright. "They will tease me dreadfully," she said.

"They shall not," he answered.

"You will stay?"

"I will never desert you."

He was a hero then. She looked fearlessly into his handsome eyes. Ah, she forgave him—she could not help it—for the Revolution, 1812, the *Alabama!*

How sweet and charming the young girl looked to him in her white mull dress, and its pretty ribbons! As they went up the stairs, Lila laughed.

"I don't begin to know what mamma will say; we are in a—a scrape!"

"I'm not ashamed—neither need you

be, Miss Lila, of helping to save the life of an old soldier——"

"Oh, but mamma doesn't care for old soldiers."

"That is to be regretted."

"People, generally, despise them in New York."

He was aware that this sweeping generalization probably referred only to Mrs. Grantley's fashionable set. "What do people generally care for in New York?" he asked, amused. "Politics?"

"People generally don't seem to care for anything. They wait——"

"They wait?"

"Yes, till they see what people in London are doing; then they do the same thing."

"But with people in London, it's politics—or it's literature or art or something——"

"But in New York it is nothing, because," and Lila seemed to be trying to

think up a good reason, "because people generally are perfectly satisfied."

Lila said this with such a serious air that the English officer forbore to smile. They arrived at the door of the drawing room, and the girl turned to him with, "Now, don't let's be afraid. People, generally, are—cowards!"

At this, the major, who now understood by "people generally" the ladies he would be obliged to confront, put on a bold front, and advanced with a countenance full of amusement and with a martial tread straight upon the enemy, who were gathered about Willy Langdon and the Javanese spaniel. At their entrance, there fell a hushed, constrained silence over the room—the silence of high displeasure.

V.

As easy and unconcerned as if he were entering the drawing room of an old-time friend in Mayfair, Major Percy

Beauchamps pressed Mrs. Grantley's finger tips, bowed pleasantly as he was presented to everyone by Miss Ravenswood, and sunk into a low upholstered chair by the side of Mrs. Johnes. Before anyone could stop him, he had taken up the Civil War as a topic, and had pointed out that, for endurance and bravery, there was nothing surpassing it in all the history of the world. He chained their attention as he described as only a trained soldier can—and the major was a student of the Civil War—that battle of which the stricken veteran, in his delirious moments, had given them such a startling reminiscence. Mrs. Grantley who, recovered from her faint, sat propped up on pillows on the divan, leaned forward with breathless interest; Mrs. Fontaine felt the tears coming into her pretty eyes and went out of the room to bathe them in ice water; Lila stood transfixed, her face aglow, her eyes sparkling

with excitement, as the British officer pictured the great fight at Shiloh and skillfully wove into it the part played by Captain Stagg. "Oh, you taciturn, silent cousins of ours—you Yankees," he said; "nothing but delirium ever forces a boasting word from your mouths. What were those words he cried before he was stricken down? 'On boys, don't mind me! Up the hill! Chase the Johnnies out o' the woods. Never mind me! Forward—forward? an' lick 'em to—ahem!'"

The major rose dramatically as he spoke the last words, and Mrs. Johnes, who could restrain herself no longer, rose too. "I for one am ashamed," she said. "And I'm going straight home and order a flag put at each window. I am proud of our country, but——"

"But it requires someone who has the genius to set it out before us," said Miss Ravenswood admiringly.

"Oh, we would never have suspected it," sighed Mrs. Fontaine.

Willy Langdon, who saw that his brief reign for the day was over, sulked in a corner for a half hour, then taking "His Jags" under his arm marched off filled with indignation. "This English guardsman thinks he can walk into an American house by the area way, and do anything he may please in it," he sneered.

"Ah, but—you believe in the English?" Mrs. Fontaine replied, amazed.

"I do—at home, in London," he replied gruffly. "But *here* they're decidedly out of place!" And he went out much provoked into the crowded streets, full to overflowing with good-natured, holiday-loving Americans.

"See that British dude," laughed one. "Bow-wow-wow!" called out another.

It was all good-natured and in the best American humor, but it may be admitted that poor Willy Langdon had a hard

time of it getting home that afternoon. A week later he had returned to his beloved Paris. "America is still uncivilized," he told everyone. "It is still barbarous; even my dog suffered terribly one of their holidays. I am so glad to get away. But they have some fine women, too—my countrymen!"

Shortly after his departure Mrs. Fontaine, Lila, and Major Beauchamps, in a hired barouche, set out for the remote regions of Brooklyn.

Following them was another carriage, in which Miss Ravenswood, resolved not to leave the major long out of her sight while on American soil, had invited her sister and two other ladies to join her.

There they heard a famous orator expound still further the new doctrine of patriotism—for patriotic feeling was really something of a novelty to all of the ladies. Is it not a novelty to many? Whether because of the purely party complexion of ad-

ministrations, the constant criticism of the executive, or the red-tape ungrateful officialism at Washington, or the universal fondness for self-depreciation, and the consequent Anglomania, which has succeeded the boastful spirit of the days of Martin Chuzzlewit—*certes*, patriotism has largely disappeared. The well known references, the oft repeated statements of the orator, came to the ladies with all the interest of a surprise. What a glorious history ours is indeed, when one cares to sum it up! Always on the side of liberty, enlightenment, civilization, and honor!

The immediate practical result of Major Beauchamps' stay of three days in New York—he seemed to be in a hurry to get back to England for certain reasons of his own—was that Captain Stagg's convalescence in the hospital was made to be as agreeable as possible. Mrs. Grantley sent the old soldier jellies and dainties; Mrs.

Fontaine, flowers; Lila read Dickens to him. Later on, when he left the hospital, she made her father take him and the faithful Yagers off two days on the yacht. These honest, simple-hearted old soldiers —who declined to be pensioned, out of Captain Stagg's queer old-fashioned American pride—you can see their little coal shop on Seventh Avenue any day. When the shadow falls across the sidewalk, you can see them—the two old comrades—sitting quietly in front of their old shop, smoking their pipes in silence and growing old. They love to tell you of the war, of the battles and sieges of other days. The coal business is dull—but it supports them. Piping times of peace are dull—but they live in remembrance. You may find their little shop, oh, patriot, if you will, and if you are kind you will purchase your winter's coal of these two old war heroes. Captain Stagg ordinarily wears in his buttonhole but one decoration. It is a

simple little affair—the tricolor button of the Loyal Legion. Grim death is rapidly making it the most honorable badge an American may wear.

And so our little story is ended, and, as a *finale*, the major marries the patriotic schoolgirl? Unfortunately for the satisfactory completion of this tale—no! At the time he was in New York, Major Percy Beauchamps was engaged to the beautiful Lady Elizabeth Mary Charlotte, second daughter of Lord Bundlecomb of the Towers, in Devonshire. There is one young person, who, he insists, shall be one of his *fiancée's* bridesmaids next June. She has since become what they call a "raving" beauty. She has health, youth, vivacity—great beauty. The major is one of her admirations still, but Lila—at nineteen, even she has begun to say, it is rather "young" to be *too* patriotic. "It isn't quite good form!"

AN UNWORLDLING.

COACHING parties, like politics, sometimes make strange companions. How it was that an old beau and prince of good fellows, Colonel Bache, came to join our party at B——, and so continue on with us up the beautiful Connecticut valley, none of us ever quite discovered.

My wife was inclined at first to be rather "frosty"; she could not understand how Simmington (our coaching host) could ask him to join us. We had two very charming "young persons" in our party, on whose cheeks we had no intention of ever bringing a blush. Of course we concealed from them at first all knowledge of Colonel Bache's mildly extravagant theatrical career. During our week's ride he became the most amusing, charming, and interesting com-

panion. He had traveled apparently over the entire globe a dozen times; he had met everyone worth knowing in Paris and London. He was a man of the world, and he knew the world well. In fact, we melted before his pleasant stories, his delightful manner, and his kindly, courteous ways. An hour after leaving B——, we not only forgave, we thanked Simmington; for our ride hitherto had been one long monotonous game of "Driving Euchre," where a tiresome cow counted one, and a cat in the window ten, and a sheep five; and we divided into "camps," as they are termed, taking either side of the road. When Colonel Bache joined us, we simply listened to his steady flow; he had no rival conversationalist aboard, except my wife, and we seemed to be ever presented with gratuitous pictures of life, from Japan to Venezuela, and from Paris to the Volga.

Colonel Bache had a square-set, brown, rather long, melancholy face. His mustache was long and overhung his mouth, entirely concealing his lips. It concealed his expression also, and one could never judge from his face whether he planned to, as Pope says, "Raise a smile or draw a tear." The tones of his voice were sympathetic, however; sometimes laden with a note of pathos, as when he told of General Gordon, whom he knew in Egypt and revered, he said, for his "simplicity and manfulness," or light and playful, as when he narrated an amusing adventure in the streets of Constantinople.

Occasionally he told us of his early connection with the theater and theatrical people. When a very young man he had "managed" a barnstorming troupe, and their adventures, their experiences, their laughable contretemps, in the very valley of the Connecticut,

through which we were traveling, kept us in roars of laughter most of the time. The company was very primitive; the farmers were satisfied with little. In those days tragedians were very tragic, and, like Mrs. Siddons, literally stabbed their potatoes with a fork. From his early connection with the stage, Colonel Bache had always been an *habitué* of the theater, but latterly only as a patron. By many actors, he told us enigmatically, he had come to be regarded as an "angel." We discovered later the exact meaning of this term.

We had driven some forty miles one day and came, in the late afternoon, through a remote village which crested the summit of a long hill above the Connecticut valley. Toward the east we could just see the white peaks of Mount Washington and the "Presidential Range" above the horizon. Something was wrong with one of the

rear wheels, and Simmington thought best to stop at a blacksmith's shop in the village for repairs. Colonel Bache, my wife, and I strolled across the wide old street into the burying ground which lay—a neglected acre—just behind the white desolate wooden church. My wife invariably—whether in a spirit of levity or otherwise, I could not always predetermine—made immediately for the last resting place of the "majority underground," who, she said, were so much more interesting than the present inhabitants.

"Who can see any charm in the impassionate *living* New Englanders?" she asked, as we entered the gate; "but the absent Deborahs, the Abbies, the Lodemas, the Nancys, and even the Hezekiahs and Zerubbabels, they are always so delightful to me. The rosebushes which grow above their graves are now a part of them, giving out sweet odors."

"A very pretty idea," observed Colo-

nel Bache, laughing. "Giving out the odor of sanctity!"

"At least we can imagine them different from the pasty, sunless faces one sees in doorways as we pass nowadays. New England was young then; it had some hope."

"Yes, and some real belief," added Colonel Bache, "people seem to need faith; it's very odd. Honest trust and faith had their due effect in faces. Now here was a plump young creature with a very sweet face, Elizabeth—yes, I imagine an English face, with blue eyes—she died in 1821. 'Died in the sweet hope of everlasting life,' a comfort to the poor dear soul, no doubt; she was only twenty-three."

A rosebush grew near the headstone, and, being June, there were four white roses on it. My wife—she is but twenty-three herself—picked the four roses in a bunch. We followed her from grave to grave, in desultory fashion, listening,

amused, to her comments. Louise seemed really to know these people—the dead and gone of these fifty, seventy years, most of them. Dead so long that they had long been a part and parcel of the rocky soil, out of which the roses and the grasses grew.

It was not impious to listen to her: she had a friendly interest not entirely humorous, in each; picturing him or her, honest Zerubbabel or gentle Gratia, with her quick, vivid imagination; repeopling the little village of Chestertown with its old underworld inhabitants, and making, doubtless, the tangled acre alive with its "hosts of protesting ghosts." Colonel Bache would not let her be interrupted; he held me back when, like the ghosts, I was about to protest, myself. How she ran on!

> "Here lies Amoriah,
> Though burned in the fire,
> His soul's gone higher
> Than his brother Josiah."

"Oh, here's a very old one, 1785:

"Stranger pause, and view ye tomb
Of one who, while in earthly bloom,
Was gay and blythesome all ye day,
Until ye night she stole away."

"Alas, poor Hannah! and only nineteen and so pretty. Hannah, you had a Sir Peter Lely face; you *bloomed.* Happy days those, too, when girls were *prevented* from knowing much, and came up like flowers; no wonder they 'bloomed!'

"But listen to this—profanity!

"Zenas was one of brothers XX,
Who came from England MDXXX,
He was a (blank) (blank) Xtian lamb
Yet for no (blank) (blank) gave a ——."

Colonel Bache roared out, "Oh, say it, say it, for the meter's sake." But Louise only looked shocked and moved along, The hand of Father Time had alone been guilty of this profanation! Zenas, the "Xtian lamb," would have risen from his

grave had he heard how his headstone *now* read to us late *fin de siècle*rs! Louise pushed away the vines from several moss-covered stones, but they were not humorous. They seemed to consider the fact of death a simple but important one, requiring a plain, accurate statement of dates of birth, marriage, and death, and that was all.

"Why couldn't one make one's own humorous burying ground?" asked Louise suddenly, turning to me, "why not have one at Lenox? I am so fond of them. I could write some funny epitaphs; I could plant wild vines and clematis; I'm good at names, too, and are not names and dates all that is left of them?"

Colonel Bache laughed. "A number of Western gentlemen have been in the habit of keeping their own private graveyards for some time," he said laconically.

"I will have mine," replied Louise

lightly; "I will have only quaint or humorous deaths; it shall be very amusing to walk in my graveyard. I don't connect *real* death with these headstones; these people are—what? The merest names, that's all; so shall mine be."

"It would be a very neat attraction to our place," I laughed; "it would be like Simmington's windmill he imported to Lenox from Long Island. I will tell you one thing: no one will respect your burying ground very much; they openly sneer at Simmington's windmill!"

"Hire someone to be buried there," suggested the colonel, "and give him an extra fee to be labeled with one of your humorous epitaphs!"

"They won't laugh *then!*" said I teasingly.

"It would at least dignify my little cemetery," said Louise seriously; and she walked on ahead. I joined her.

The colonel branched off to one side

where the cleaner marbles and fewer brambles denoted the resting place of later generations. We heard him give an exclamation, as he paused before a short broken shaft—one of those sentimental reminders, so sadly common in an American cemetery, of broken lives. Attracted by curiosity we approached him. Far across the Western slope the sun was setting in a gorgeous mass of golden clouds.

"Have you discovered a long lost relative?" I asked laughingly. His face was very grave.

"I knew that young man," he said. "At least one *real* person is buried here—not a name, merely—I knew Chetwood—so he is dead! it must be the same, he came from somewhere up here in the hills of Vermont. 'William Kirkland Chetwood'—that was his name—very odd. I have a message for him, too; this grave is recent, not a year old—1891."

My wife drew near in silent curiosity as the colonel took out his memorandum book, and made a few notes of the stone and its date.

"Chetwood—so he's dead. Well, well, Marie will be interested. I saw her in Paris last December. This Chetwood affair was a mere episode to her, but to *him?* So the poor chap died! I must write her. It is very sad."

"Do tell us about it!" burst out Louise, deeply interested. But the colonel turned away; he seemed silent and affected. He took a walk by himself, out and around the other side of the church, where he stood for some time leaning against the trunk of an old elm, apparently lost in thought. The sun set; a purple twilight followed; a ride of five miles behind our four restless horses brought us to the end of our journey for that day.

Two evenings later, progressing on our tour, we were all together, toasting our

feet on the fender of the Halfway House near H——. It was a cool, almost frosty night, and the fire was very comfortable. We had had a beautiful day's ride along the river, and up over a high ridge of half wooded mountains. My wife had not said a word about the discovery of the last resting place of the mysterious William Kirkland Chetwood, but that name, the date of his birth, 1865, the date of his death, 1891, and the verse—the simple line from Bonar—

Let not the music in me die,

limned upon the broken column, seemed to be engraven on her mind for further reference. The very fact of finding such a deeply poetic sentiment as this among the pious commonplaces of a New England burial place, would in itself have awakened some interest and surprise.

We men were smoking; Simmington

provided us with most excellent cigars. His two pretty daughters were seated at my wife's feet. We had been laughing a good deal at her divagations. Suddenly she suggested boldly, "It's a good time to tell us about Chetwood, and Colonel Bache must not think he can escape us."

"Oh, a story? do tell us," exclaimed Bessie Simmington, looking up expectantly. "This is just the time and place for one."

Colonel Bache hesitated, coughed, and then sighed.

"It's nothing, it's an incident—it isn't much of a story. Chetwood was simply an innocent country boy; I never saw him till he came down to New York after graduating with high honors at his college, an up-country one, I fancy it was Dartmouth; he had no ideas at all about city life; he was very good-looking—had the finest, most truthful eyes I ever saw; they were too fine

for a man. They were a woman's eyes. His mother was with him while at college—a woman, still young, who doted on him. I fancy he had her eyes—gray, thoughtful, very gentle, I remember. Well, of course, he fell in love, and—and the woman, I believe, jilted him; and then he left the city; and then, I find—he is dead. That is all. He was a fine boy—a very handsome boy—and I assure you that's all the story there is."

The other Miss Simmington, Julie, yawned. "Rather stupid too," she whispered up to my wife. "Not much of a story!"

Louise, who was an astute general, rose after a little, and pretended to yawn, too, and so dragged the two girls off with her to bed. "See you make him tell that story to you—*as it happened*," she found time to whisper to me, "he won't tell it to *us*." She closed the door, and I kissed her pretty voluble lips good-night.

After we had resumed our seats before the fire, Colonel Bache, without urging, began leisurely, over his fresh cigar:

"It was a very hard case; Chetwood was the nephew of Blaisdell, you know, who owned and managed the ——Theater. That was about five or six years ago. Blaisdell knew everybody in New York and took his nephew everywhere. Chetwood—I remember him—a handsome boy—very conceited with his college honors thick upon him—but as innocent as a young dove—a country lad with all the simpleness of his youth of quietude behind him. He fell madly in love the first thing, and at first sight, with pretty Marie Stevenson, who was playing then at the —— Theater. He was studying law, at the Columbia School, I believe, and he stood very well, too, and worked hard. He had a great ambition to be a lawyer, but Marie knocked all that sort of thing completely out of him,

She was six years older than he, and she was as beautiful off the stage as on. Chetwood used to hang about behind the scenes and talk to her. She had a lot of men about her, some very well known clubmen, too; he treated them all with a polite toleration; he didn't, he couldn't blame any of us for admiring Marie Stevenson! He used to beg her to marry him, and she refused; though I think she was charmed by him too, he was so high and so innocent—er-er—she had a kind of soul—at times, too, you know, she could appreciate him. You see he had been wholly under his mother's care till he went to the little rural college—and—have you ever visited one of those small New England colleges? I have; they are very cold, very formal, and intensely proper. They are saintly monasteries where the young men vie with each other in the highest mental and athletic competition. They know nothing of the

world, and are literally miles away from a dramshop. The transition from such a place to the —— Theater, which, during Marie Stevenson's engagement, he made his daily headquarters, was like going from a cold northern clime to a tropical one. Chetwood, as I remember him, seemed to be always in evening dress—his first—and to be always sending flowers or notes to Marie. I well recall one night after they became secretly engaged—Blaisdell was dead against it, of course; in fact, we all were against it; Blaisdell swore his nephew should go back to Vermont where he came from. You see he felt he never could face the boy's mother. I remember, as I say, one night, a messenger brought behind the scenes a note from Chetwood, and she laughed and opened it—she was waiting to go on; she kept the audience clamoring for five minutes while she read the note, laughing, *aloud* to us. It was full

of poetry, I remember, and she purposely got the meter all wrong—she was in a stunning costume of black velvet and stage diamonds—handsome as a picture—I never saw a more beautiful woman—she faded somewhat afterward. She was a great actress, too, much greater than the parts she played, and that night we all went to Jack Chalmers' dinner to Maud Everard, at Del's, after the theater, and she learned the poem by heart in the carriage driving over, and repeated it. I remember a verse,

> "And our love is a secret, belle Marie,
> And a secret, sweetheart, let it be.
> To Heaven above we can tell our love,
> And the angels will chant it, Marie!

"Some such nonsense as that, he wrote, I remember; you see the boy was crazy about her, and he thought no one read his secret. Why, it was a common joke. The call boys laughed at him—the stage carpenter knew it—everyone knew it, and

because they knew *her* they laughed at *him.* I believe the infatuated boy thought every wig, blond or brunette, she wore, was the real thing! His rooms in his boarding house were lined with her photographs. Blaisdell told me afterward that he used to see her home many a night, and then walk the streets till morning composing poetry to her. New York is a prosy, big, dull city they say, but we don't know all the romance of it; I dare say some day a novelist will rise up and tell us of it. I myself have had some strange experiences. Perhaps there are many Chetwoods, poor devils . . ."

Colonel Bache knocked the ashes from the end of his cigar, and resumed:

"One night toward the close of the season—the play ran something like two hundred nights, it ran far into May—I happened to be chatting with Tom Lamb, the actor of the 'funny man' part, in the wings; Chetwood came in, and not seeing

Marie, he walked over to me quickly and asked me to cash a draft. It was for $150. I hadn't the money, but as he seemed very urgent, I let him have a hundred. I jokingly asked him if he had been 'fighting the tiger,' and he turned his flashing eyes on me angrily; then he calmed down a little; he turned away, and then came back; he was dreadfully nervous about something. 'Colonel Bache,' he said, in a low tone, 'we are going to be married to-night.'

"'You and Marie Stevenson?'

"'Yes.'

"I stammered out, 'Does Blaisdell know it?'

"'No.'

"'You ought to tell him.'

"I was casting about in my mind how, in some way, to prevent it. It seemed a wicked—a horrible thing.

"'I shall not tell him until afterward; when the play is over we shall drive to a

clergyman's and we would like a few friends present. Marie wanted you.'

"At that moment Blaisdell entered; he nodded coldly to his nephew, and went and stood in the wings where Marie, at the end of her scene, would make her exit. He was in evening dress, and wore a silk hat tilted back a little on his head. He was not fond of jewelry, but had then, I remember, one large solitaire in his shirt. He was a large man, and had a voice like a locomotive whistle. I managed to slip over to him and tell him, for I had come to be rather fond of the boy. Just then Marie made her exit covered with flowers, triumphant amid the crashing applause, and radiant in her beauty. He seized her by the wrist, and swung her around facing him. He was terribly angry; he was a madman.

"'*I want you to let that boy alone!*' he cried. The armful of flowers fell to the floor; Marie cried out with the pain, and

tried to tear herself from his harsh grasp. The descent from the height of popularity and extravagant applause, to being treated in this brutal fashion, was too much for her; she struck him with her free hand twice, three times—I can see now where the glass stage diamonds cut his face just below the eye—and the blood flowed down and spattered the expanse of his white shirt front. Chetwood rushed up between them; I believe, in her rage and excitement, she pummeled him, too; she was in a towering fury, and that only made her the more beautiful. She jumped into a fur-lined cloak her maid held open for her, and, crying she would leave the theater forever, rushed out through the stage door into the street, Chetwood following her. Blaisdell swore for a minute or two like a trooper; then, 'Let her go!' he shouted to someone who started after her, 'she'll come back—she wouldn't miss the applause in that last act for any-

thing I could do ; besides, she's too jealous of her understudy,' and he turned on his heel and walked over to Tom Lamb's dressing room to wash his face. He was bleeding like a prize fighter.

"The curtain fell, and there was a long wait. A few of us fell to making bets on Marie's return. The odds were in favor of her keeping her word, to her credit be it said. Half an hour passed ; the orchestra had played the interlude over five times ; they had even utilized the 'xylophone,' and given the audience a dismal set of 'popular airs,' when in she and Chetwood walked arm in arm, he looking very happy, and she gay and triumphant. She pretended not to see Blaisdell. 'Congratulate me,' she cried to the rest of us, 'I am Mrs. Willie Chetwood ; am I not, Willie?' and she gave him a stage kiss. Then she ran to her dressing room, and the curtain was rung up with the usual chorus.

"Of course we all made an effort to congratulate Chetwood. We told him he was a sly young rascal, and we all shook him by the hand. He told us that they had hurried to a clergyman's house near by, and that the knot was duly tied. He went up to Blaisdell and offered his hand; in everything the boy did he was very refined, very handsome—he had the manners of a prince. He apologized for giving his uncle any uneasiness on account of 'his wife's' absence. Blaisdell looked at him steadily for a moment over the unlit cigar he held in his teeth; it was a half cynical, half pitying glance. He knew she *was* his wife, for the boy had never lied.

"'I wrote your mother six months ago'—he spoke so slowly and distinctly we all heard it—'that I would gladly furnish you the money and send you abroad. She refused. I wrote her again, urging it; again she refused. And so—this is the end.'

"Chetwood bowed. 'I—I hope, sir, you will forgive me—you will forgive my wife. You were very cruel to her to-night—for my sake; be kind to her now—for my sake.'

"He stood just where one of the stage lights fell full on his face; it was the face of a saint. It had the purity of an ascetic and all the fresh beauty of honest, sweet youth. Blaisdell, I know, loved the lad as he loved himself. He loved him with almost a father's impatience and intolerance.

"'You have been always so kind to me, sir,' added Chetwood, 'and why should you not be kind to Marie?'

"His uncle gave him a glance of whimsical despair, threw up his hand, and walked away.

"There was a triumphant expression in Marie's fine eyes as she swept by Blaisdell, and the deafening applause in another instant told us that she had ap-

peared before the footlights, for the last act. Chetwood went out into the house, and watched her. At the end of the play I saw them go out together. Marie's eyes were downcast then, she was trembling."

Colonel Bache paused and relit his cigar.

"And—then?" I asked.

"There is little more to tell," he said. "Of course the marriage turned out badly. They separated, and I believe Chetwood went abroad. Then after a few months he returned and used to haunt the theater like a ghost, when his wife was playing. I met him once or twice; he seemed to have lost all heart; it was very sad. He got in the habit of sending her flowers by the usher as he once used to do, and he seemed to gloat over the stage smile she gave when she received them, but, save for this, he never saw her again. He

never *would* meet her! They found him in a reverie once after the play was over, and he had to be roused and sent home. The boy's heart was broken—that was all—a singular case. Blaisdell fairly sorrowed and wept over him, but Marie was a great drawing card still, and he never broke with her, although he never forgave her. When the young man left New York, he must have gone back to his Vermont mountains, where an innocent such as he, in my judgment, belongs. I suppose he found life rather hard—and died. And it's odd, I had a message for him, too. I met Marie Stevenson in Paris, and she said, 'Tell Willie, from me, when you run across him, that I pray to be forgiven,' and I think she meant it, too, poor woman. . . I have run across Willie—I have stepped across his grave. . . Poor woman, she will be sorry. She will have a bad half hour—but she won't kill herself!"

The colonel's story ended, and as we rose, I heard a sound in the hall. The curiosity of women! I went out and found my wife Louise there, crying softly. She had deliberately listened. She admitted the charge. "I keep thinking," said she, "of the line on his headstone:

"Let not the music in me die!

"Poor soul—poor soul! Don't you see, it was the pure ideal that he loved. And that creature destroyed his faith—she did her best to kill 'the music in him!' I hate her! I hate her!"

HOW AMASA SNOW GOT ON HIS FEET.

AMASA SNOW sat in a little law office, his feet on the top rim of his stove, and his stove full of wood and red hot. His office was about a rod from his house, and quite near the high wooden gate leading into the village street. Over the door one read, "Prothonotary and Attorney-at-law." It was a huge, faded sign in black letters; one could not go by Amasa Snow's office and not know the business of its occupant. The trouble with the sign was it was not alluring enough. Squire Slayton, down the street, with a very small sign and over a grocery store, and without a big wide house, and a family name and connection —Squire Slayton somehow got all the law

business there was going in East Chesterville. Amasa Snow sat tilted back in his wooden armchair, pulling his long chin beard, scratching the few gray hairs in his sloping gray head, and trying to conjure up some new scheme by which he could beat Slayton again, and defer the foreclosure sale. He had deferred it five times on one excuse and another; but Slayton had him this time; there was no help for it. The old place would have to be sold—the old place where his boyhood had been passed until he went away to college, and where he had lived ever since, and seen his six girls grow up about him. His six girls! He reached down and broke a splinter off a bit of pine-wood by the stove, and began to chew hard on it. What would become of the girls? Everyone a beauty in *his* eyes; everyone worthy of marrying the Governor of the State. How could he tell *them* that the sale of their old home could be

postponed no longer; that every device and trick, and every legal quibble, had been tried and tried again? He *dared* not tell the girls. He looked out of the window; it was raining. An April shower, to be sure, with a prospect of a golden sunset later on, but making everything outside under the trees look very muddy and dismal. Amasa Snow felt very much depressed. Fate appeared to be against him.

What was to be done? He had borrowed from everyone in the town. He could borrow no longer. If the old place were sold at twice its value it would not pay his debts. He had lived well, and his six motherless girls had never known how poor he was. "Oh!" he groaned, as he rose and stood with his back to that hot stove—"oh, how can I get on my feet?"

There were his law books—a couple of thousand dingy calf volumes, not kept up

to date, the inheritance from the judge, his father, but even the law books were "chatteled," as they said, *i. e.*, mortgaged quite beyond their value. Everything he had, in fact, was mortgaged. He had come this wet April day to the end of things. Next week came the sale. He felt like saying—the deluge. He had not enough money to take him and his family out West.

That was his plan—to go West. He hardly felt his fifty years. He felt young and energetic when he thought of the West. By the way, there was his brother Elisha—his brother who in his youth was so like him. *He* was West, in California. He had not seen him for twenty years. The last he had heard from him was a request to send on a hundred dollars. That was five years ago. He had sent him fifty, and nothing had been heard from Elisha since, except his name indorsed across the back of the

check, showing that he had received the money.

No, it was clear that Elisha could never help him. Elisha had caused him to lose several thousand dollars once in a mine. Elisha's name was always a great bugbear in his family since. No, Elisha could not be expected to help him. Stay! An idea. Amasa Snow began to poke the red-hot fire vigorously. It was a bleak raw day, but the fire was hot enough in that little office if left alone. An idea. Elisha should be *made* to help him. It was a last hope, but it fired him with enthusiasm. He reached up into a dusty bookcase and got down a file of letters. He was looking for Elisha's address.

Just then there came a tap at the office door. Amasa turned around. "By thunder!" he cried, nearly carried off his feet with astonishment. "It's Elisha—*in propria persona!*"

"I have come home," said Elisha meekly. "I have come home, to neighbor round."

"And just in the nick of time, Elisha. Mighty glad I am to see you!" Then a thought occurred to him, as he shook his brother's hand, with that feeble wave in the air so common in southern Connecticut; he would not tell Elisha of his financial condition. He might not help him if he did. No, he would keep his own counsel.

The two brothers sat down by the stove, and Amasa threw another stick of soft pine-wood on the fire. It was frightfully hot. "See here, Elisha," he said, after a pause. "How's the Grand American Eagle a-doin'?"

"She isn't a-doin'."

"Nothin' at all?"

"No; hasn't been for ten years."

"It *was* a splendid mine *once*, Elisha. You used to say so."

"So it was. But we struck hard pan—you remember about it. What's the use of rakin' over old personalities at this time, when I ought to be received with open arms, and a bonfire lighted, and fireworks touched off?"

"I know, I know," replied Amasa apologetically. "I ought to ask how you have happened on East this way."

"Why, yes; you ought to show *some* brotherly feeling. It's natural."

"Well, Elisha, have you got any ready money in your pocket?"

"A thousand dollars."

Amasa walked over to his old rusty safe. "Better put the money in here?" he asked casually. Elisha handed him a roll of bills. "Don't feel like payin' back any of that two thousand?" asked Amasa facetiously, referring to the loan he had made him in the mining scheme.

"No," said Elisha, "I don't." After a pause, while his brother locked the safe,

he said, "That thousand is the last cent I've got in the world."

"Glad you've come home. Glad you've come to live with me," said Amasa, rubbing his hands. "The girls will be so happy to see you. Come, let's go in the house."

He slipped an old, well-worn overcoat over his shoulders without buttoning it, and they went out into the rain. Elisha was very well dressed. Anyone would have taken him for a well-to-do Western bank president. He looked sleek and well fed. There wasn't a trace of anxiety about his face. Otherwise the brothers looked very much alike.

As they were crossing the threshold of the house, Amasa whispered, "Just tell the girls you're a millionaire; for a joke, you know."

Elisha winked. "Yes," he said, "for a joke—wish I was, though," and they entered the parlor. There were the six

girls; six good-looking, hearty, frank, healthy country girls. They all rose and gave a veritable shout of welcome. They usually gave a united shout whenever anything pleased them. They fairly screamed when Elisha opened the door. They flew at him. They kissed him. They took his hat for him; they took away his overcoat and umbrella. And *how* they were impressed when their father said, proudly, "And then to think that your uncle has returned to us a millionaire!"

"A millionaire! really?" chorused the girls.

Elisha began to feel his old boastful spirit, for which he had long been noted, coming over him again. "Why," he said, "out in California we don't reckon a million much money. All my friends are worth over a million. My five million dollars don't count very much out *there*."

"Elisha says he is going to build a public library building for East Chesterville," put in Amasa without a grimace.

"A public library!" chorused the girls.

"He says he don't mind paying off the debt on the church either," added their prevaricator of a father.

"How perfectly splendid!"

"No one would have thought the Grand American Spread-eagle Mine would have panned out so well," said Amasa.

By this time the six girls were dancing around the room in their excitement. They had never been so excited since John Mawley, the son of Mawley the mill-owner at the other end of the village, had become engaged to Bessie Snow, their eldest sister—said Mawley having concluded, on the consent and advice of his father, to break off said engagement, after knowledge of Lawyer Snow's financial

condition came out and became common gossip.

"Elisha says the Sunday school shall have a new organ if it takes his last cent," said their father laughing heartily. *He* could not hold himself in.

"Well," said Elisha, "not *quite* as bad as *that*. But they shall have a new melodeon—yes."

"No—organ," insisted the girls.

"Wal—organ be it!" exclaimed Elisha.

This capped the climax. The Sunday school had been holding picnics, strawberry festivals, ice cream festivals, lectures, busy bees, and I don't know what besides—in which the six girls had taken a lively interest—to raise money enough for an organ; but, do their best, they could raise only fifty dollars. They threw themselves upon their uncle, and as there was not quite enough of him to go around, they threw themselves upon their father. It was a touching scene. Two of the

girls were in tears, and one of them was heard to say, with choking voice, "Our deliverer!"

And there in the midst stood the two old hypocrites, laughing as heartily as the rest—only—only in Amasa Snow's eyes there glistened some real tears. Poor man! how he wished it was all true! For he loved his girls beyond everything on earth, and their happiness and joy unnerved him for his little scheme. If it should fail, how should he dare look them in the face again?

Suddenly Bessie looked up. "It's late," she said—"it's dreadfully late for the sewing society!"

When they were alone, Elisha said: "You've done it! you've gone and done it! In five minutes every word of what we've said will be all over this village. Yes, and all over the State of Connecticut. Dum it! I say, Amasa, this isn't right!"

"Why? Don't you have any fears. Suppose they do tell of your millions; it will give you credit."

"Ah, yes, yes! but they will all be after me for my money." Elisha straightened himself up very stiffly, and buttoned his coat over his chest very firmly, as if to impress on his brother the fact that he wouldn't let them have a cent—*not one cent*—if they did.

"Well, don't say it isn't *so*, anyway," whispered Amasa, and led Elisha to his room, where that great and good philanthropist and millionaire lay down upon a sofa and took a comfortable nap.

For a week East Chesterville was in a condition of ferment. The resurrection of Elisha Snow in the form of a millionaire, after having departed twenty years before with a reputation for unconquerable laziness, and an ability only remarkable for imbibing hard cider, was enough to shake the entire county to its center.

Then his magnificent bequests—the town library building, the new organ, raising the minister's salary, proposing to establish a Home for Incurable Idiots; for poor Elisha found he could not stop promising when he had once begun, and his plan to build a new gymnasium, skating rink, winter bath, all combined, for the young people—made him at once the idol of the town.

Mawley the mill-owner met Amasa one day in the street. "See here," he said, "I've told Slayton to let up on you. You and I were always old friends. Pay up the interest on that mortgage any time you please. By the way, I'm tired of Slayton. He's hounded you, when you were down, in a darned mean way. I'm sick of Slayton. I'll send you round a retainer to-morrow of five hundred dollars in a case I've got against some Providence people. Big case—big money in it. How's your brother? Pretty well, I

hope. Those California magnates are all coming East, I hear. Think your brother would like to put any money in my mill? A big chance now. I don't need the money, but it don't pay to keep all your eggs in one basket. How's Bessie? Good-morning."

"Mr. Mawley, one moment. You don't let up on me and send me this lawsuit because Elisha is a millionaire, do you?"

"Oh, no, no, no! My dear fellow, no, no! Why, what an idea! By the way, *I* never favored the breaking off of that match—my son and Bessie. Good-day."

Amasa Snow got round behind the fence, and laughed and shook until the entire fence laughed and shook with him. His little scheme was working well. One needs very little capital in this world if one can only obtain its substitute—credit. That week and the next he had retainers sent him from several wealthy proprietors

in a neighboring manufacturing town. They had heard of his brother's millions. He had the foreclosure suit discontinued, paid Mawley his interest, got his mortgage extended indefinitely. What is more, his business picked up so that he paid a large sum on account all around among his creditors. They all said, "Elisha is doing it for him." He painted and refurnished the old Snow house. He ran slightly into debt in doing it, but his girls had some new clothes sent them from New York. *He* donned a new suit of broadcloth, and—he was happy. He was on his feet. Slayton was utterly nonplused. In vain the wily practitioner went about spreading doubts as to Elisha's having any money whatever. "Why don't he buy that organ?" he kept saying, until people began to wonder why, indeed.

As soon as the rumor spread about that Elisha was childless, and that he intended leaving his money in equal shares to his six

nieces, they went off literally like hot cakes. Mawley junior, who really loved the girl, married Bessie, and then they were all married off in batches of two, until the youngest refused to marry at all, saying with her finger at her lip, "she preferred to stay with her father."

In one year all this happened. Amasa Snow was now a successful man—his debts paid and his practice increasing. One day the rumor reached *him*—why had not Elisha paid for that organ?

He went to Elisha. "It is time," he said calmly, "for you to disappear."

"I'm very contented here," protested Elisha, "reading the newspapers and sitting in the hotel. It agrees with me. I don't want to disappear."

He liked the adulation extended to him on the ground that he was a millionaire. He played the easy, well-fed, rich plutocrat revisiting his New England home to perfection. His acting was con-

summate, because it was nature itself, without a mirror being held up to it. He had just that amount of narrowness, of close-fistedness, of sagacious doubt as to the motives of men who approached him with schemes for investment; he acted the millionaire to perfection, and he never overdid it.

"Amasa, I can't go," he said. "They think I'm such a good man to *make* money. They have actually brought money to me to make more for them. Yes, I've received over fifty thousand dollars for investment within the last month."

"Thunder and guns!" exclaimed Amasa. "This is dreadful! I see State prison yawning before us!"

"I don't. I see a comfortable old age a dawnin' for us."

"But this money——"

"It's all to be invested, aint it?"

"But——"

"Wal, aint I honest?"

Amasa stepped back aghast.

"It's just what the Grand American Spread-eagle Mine needs," said Elisha, swelling himself out—"*a little money.*"

"Well, take the money and go, then—*go!* I will have nothing to do with this—nothing!"

Amasa was very angry. He resolved to be responsible for his brother no longer. He went to his daughters, all but one now well married and in happy, well-to-do homes. "Your uncle and I have had a row," he said. "He is going back to California."

"And the organ, the new library, the gymnasium?"

"Well, he is mad about something. He says the town has slighted him. But one thing must be understood, whatever he does—*I* wash my hands of him forever!"

Elisha did leave a few days after. He

took away about a hundred thousand dollars of widows' and orphans' funds, went to San Francisco, put his money into various enterprises, paid the beneficiaries eight per cent. interest, was honest as the day, and died a few years ago, worth a great deal of money, which he left, share and share alike, to his brother's six girls, and he left a thousand dollars for the new organ.

Amasa still lives—a fairly well-to-do old country lawyer—slightly in debt still, in East Chesterville. But he is the adored grandpapa of twelve of the dearest little grandchildren, and he often says to them benignly, "Children, I have put you all—and myself—on our feet. Yes, but I had to tell your mothers an awful lie!"

"What was the lie, grandpopper?"

"I had to say the laziest man alive—your granduncle, children—I had to say the penniless old rascal—your grand-

father's brother, my dears, who had robbed me of all I had in one of his confounded mines, the Great American Spread-eagle Gold and Silver—I had to say, and stan' to it, that he was one of the biggest millionaires on the Pacific coast! But that lie has put us all on our feet!"

POOR COUSIN PARKER!

IT had long been the custom of the Tasker family to hold an annual meeting in August at East Village. Such Taskers as were present asked about the Taskers absent. The Taskers absent wrote letters to Abram Tasker at East Village, who read them aloud at the family gathering. They related to each other the stirring family events which had happened during the year since the previous family meeting. Sometimes the Taskers present were called upon to commiserate a death, or to discuss an engagement, or to congratulate a young bride. Sometimes they read of new Taskers who had come into the world. Sometimes the squalling newcoming Tasker presented himself *in propria persona.* *Always* they

met to pity and to blame poor Cousin Parker!

There were Boston Taskers, and Chicago Taskers, and New York Taskers. Then there were Taskers from every State in New England. Universally, however, the Taskers present felt called upon every year to contribute for the benefit of poor Cousin Parker. He lived away off up in New Hampshire somewhere—it was quite indefinite where he lived, and hitherto he seemed to live *on* his relatives.

He had had, it was said by kind-hearted old Abram Tasker, at a family gathering, the "hardest kind of hard luck." (It made the Chicago Tasker very angry to hear about this "hard luck.") "In the first place," said Abram, "he never had ought to have married Mis' Frink, the school-ma'am. Mis' Frink was a widder lady with nine children; an' those children! they ate Cousin Parker outen house and home; yes, they did. Then he wa'n't

fitted for business, an' he hedn't ought t' have started to manufacture oleomargarine in a butter community. Cousin Parker nigh lost his life—he was shot at because of that there oleomargarine in a butter community. Then he hedn't ought t' hev tried borin' for ile up in that granite region where he lived; there wa'n't no ile there, an' Parker he ought t' hev known better. Then he tried farmin' an' failed, because he tried it accordin' to a city farmers' journal. He planted at the wrong season. He done everything wrong. He seemed to hev mighty hard luck."

Every year there would come to the meeting either Cousin Parker himself, or a long wail of a letter from Cousin Parker describing his afflictions and asking for help. Every year a purse was raised, and the relatives were taxed for "Mis'" Frink-Parker's benefit and her nine children. Every year the assembled Taskers

grumbled, and the Chicago Tasker stopped coming East because of it. "It doos seem," said Abram, "as if the hull family was merely livin' from year to year to kinder support Cousin Parker."

Miss Perkins, whose mother was a Tasker, of Newburyport (with an accent, please, on the "port"), was used to speaking out in meeting, and she usually freed her mind every year—she was a regular attendant at these family meetings. She freed her mind, but at the same time she gave liberally. And it was noticed that the louder were her protests, and the more severe her condemnation of Cousin Parker's unfortunate business habits, the larger sum she gave toward his support.

"Cousin Parker," she snapped out at the meeting last August, "don't deserve any luck. Turned inventor *now*, has he? Well, land! what can he invent?"

"Hush, Miss Perkins!" said Abram; "Cousin Parker is present with us."

Miss Perkins put on her eye-glasses and looked around the circle of Taskers, who had assembled in the great barren parlor of Abram Tasker's large farmhouse. There were several Boston Taskers (*N. B.*, the *rich* Taskers); there were the New York Taskers (very well off); there were all the Vermont Taskers (hard, earnest folk); and there, last of all, in a corner, holding his hat between his knees, almost out of sight, looking so forlorn and sheepish that Miss Perkins could only pity him, sat *Cousin Parker himself!*

He was a small, thin man, with a most distrustful, beseeching expression. His head was bent forward, his coat was buttonless and shabby. His eyes were modestly bent on the floor. When all the combined eyes of all the rich and great Taskers were turned toward him, he fairly shriveled up within himself, and looked furtively toward the door, as if

with a view to a speedy and ignominious retreat.

"So that is Cousin Parker," exclaimed Miss Perkins involuntarily. "Land!"

"We would all like to hear from Cousin Parker himself," said Hon. Enos K. Tasker of Boston (the rich and great Tasker), in a pompous voice. "We would like to hear from him as to his family and his affairs. Cousin Parker—er—won't you tell us how you are doing this year?"

It appeared that Cousin Parker swallowed a great swallow, and his Adam's apple rose and fell without an audible response.

"Come forward!" beamed Abram Tasker kindly; and, as if to suit action to his words, Abram, who was a huge, kindly old soul, with an enormous strength of arm, advanced, and, without intending it, lifted Cousin Parker bodily out into the center of the Tasker semicircle, and

set him down. There was a subdued murmur among all the Taskers, as to the probability, from his shabby and generally unkempt appearance, that the fund to be raised this year would have to be unusually large.

"I—I feel very thankful—for the past," was what Cousin Parker whispered feebly, so that Abram, who stood by him protectingly, leaned his great ear down, and alone heard him.

"He feels thankful for the past!" roared Abram, with a kindly, encouraging smile for poor Cousin Parker.

"Oh, he feels thankful for the past, does he?" exclaimed Miss Perkins. "Well, land! I should think he ought. Why, he's had money every year—altogether, two or three thousand dollars, at least."

"He's expectin' a change for the futur'!" called out Abram. "A big change. He's awful hopeful."

A smile of pity went around among all the Taskers present. Mrs. New York Tasker, as it was a warm day, held her vinaigrette to her nose, and complained a little of feeling faint. The dismal photographs, hung about the wall in black frames, she said, gave her quite a turn. They were photographs of deceased Taskers, standing up, man and wife together, very stiff and straight, holding on to chairs for dear life, or leaning an elbow upon romantic Italian scenery, or a Venetian balustrade. The hair-cloth sofas and chairs, too, were rather awe-inspiring. Much as Mrs. New York Tasker admired the family into which she had married, she admitted that they were, some of them, very odd country-people. And this poor Cousin Parker! What an oddity *he* was, to be sure!

"He has tried next to everything to get on," went on Abram, the mouthpiece, after a prolonged listening to

Cousin Parker's whisper. "He went West an' tried to grow up with the country. But he didn't stay long enough to grow. He started a newspaper, but he took the wrong side in politics, an' got fired. Then he j'ined a circus and figgered as the hind legs of an ellerphunt; but the folks got on to his disguise, he says, an' they kinder fired rocks at him, an' so he cum back home to Mis' Parker an' the nine children sorter hopeless. But his hope picked up when we as a fam'ly cum forward an' let him hev two hundred dollars last year. Thet started him up ag'in inventin', an' he useter sit up nights, he says, hopin' an' inventin'."

Miss Perkins gave a sniff. Other Taskers present probably *would* have sniffed had not the prim New England spinster kindly done it for them.

Then, again, there was a whisper.

"He says he has at larst finally turned inventor, an' is goin' to make it his busi-

ness," roared Abram, still leaning down to Cousin Parker. Immediately there was a buzz of loud protestation from every right-minded Tasker present.

"He says he again wishes to say that in the past he has had very hard luck," roared Abram a second time.

"Ask him if he thinks if he should turn to and do a little work now and then by accident his luck wouldn't change," said Miss Perkins sharply.

Cousin Parker gave her such a sad, beseeching look that she wished she had kept quiet. Miss Perkins did not wish it to be understood that she was heartless; but it made her very impatient to take hold of Cousin Parker and shake him. Oh, that she could have him under her charge for a time at Newbury*port!* She would get this inventor nonsense out of him! Yes, indeed!

Abram's ear was now so long near Cousin Parker's mouth that the Taskers

knew something interesting was coming. At last he roared: "He says he's got a smart partner. The smart partner has sold one of his inventions for him. His name is Ephraim Shouter. He comes from a family of lawyers."

"Depend upon it, then, the smart partner has got all the money, and Cousin Parker has got the experience," said the New York Tasker, with a wise shake of the head.

"He says the invention was sold to the Standard Ile Company, fer—*fer what*, Cousin Parker?"

A further audible whisper, after which Cousin Parker looked more sheepish and more crestfallen than ever. Every Tasker in the room leaned forward with interest.

"Fer—I can't believe it—fer two hundred thousand dollars!" roared Abram.

A great sensation.

"Two hundred thousand dollars; an' the smart partner took a hundred an'—an'

—an' seventy-five thousand fer his fee, an'—gave him twenty-five. He says he wants to pay off his debts to the Tasker family."

For the space of two minutes there was perfect silence. Not a Tasker spoke or moved. Finally Miss Perkins said:

"*I* always believed that there was a great deal *to* Cousin Parker!"

Cousin Parker slunk back to his seat, very much overcome with self-consciousness, while the ladies fell to discussing him before his face as if he were absent.

"He has been greatly abused," said Mrs. Enos K. Tasker of Boston; "and you, Miss Perkins, have abused dear Cousin Parker more than anyone."

"I *have* spoken unwisely about Cousin Parker, I admit," said Miss Perkins, "but I meant it for his good, and if he has made money as he says, I am as glad as anyone. I want to shake him by the hand, and tell him how glad I am he *has*

done something for himself, even if the smart partner got almost all the money."

Mrs. New York Tasker was ahead of all the Taskers in taking Cousin Parker by the hand, and in asking him about his good fortune. All they could get out of him, however, was that it was a new process of purifying kerosene, which had proved very valuable. Cousin Parker's luck had turned; and that very day, before he had left Abram Tasker's Vermont farm at East Village, he had returned all the money he had had from his relatives with interest at six per cent.

Several years later, when the Ohio, Bungtown, and Chesapike Railway Co. defaulted in the payment of interest on its stock and bonds, Miss Perkins, whose small income was entirely dependent upon the dividends of that important trunk line, was reduced to the necessity of applying, through the kind-hearted Abram, for some assistance at

the annual family gathering. She did not attend in person at East Village, but she wrote a pathetic letter of appeal. Cousin Parker was present—whose opinion in business matters was now much valued by the Hon. Enos K. Tasker of Boston. He said nothing, and although now worth "considerable money," appeared unwilling to subscribe. A week later, however, he turned up in Newbury*port*. He went to see Miss Perkins at her little boarding house. It was up a back street, and in a dingy neighborhood, for Miss Perkins, owing to the manipulations of a very powerful railway magnate, was now exceedingly poor in this world's goods. There was still enough left, however, to support her and her cat and canary in a little back room in the boarding house. When Cousin Parker called he looked vacantly about the close little parlor into which he was ushered.

"She's used to better'n this," he whispered to himself. "*Poor* Miss Perkins!"

Then he blushed very red, for, lo and behold! she had entered noiselessly, and was standing opposite him.

"I *am* poor, Cousin Parker, it is true; and I want to say it right here—it's taught me a lesson. I guess I can pity those in misfortune a little now—I guess I can feel how hard it is not to have money and not to be able to earn it."

Cousin Parker moved uneasily in his seat. He felt embarrassed. "I—I want you to come home with me," he said. looking down. "I want you to come. Mis' Parker wants you to come. The children want you, Miss Perkins. They feel grateful."

The tears came into Miss Perkins's eyes, but she hurriedly brushed them away.

"They know how you did when I was in hard luck. You came forward an' loaned, Miss Perkins! Oh, I guess we Taskers

can stand by one another in hard luck! Now come, Miss Perkins, get ready!"

Miss Perkins was quite overcome. She fairly sobbed. An hour before, she felt so friendless, so forlorn, so hopeless! She wished she was dead!

"They are expectin' you, Miss Perkins; an' I know you won't hate my three boys. No," added Cousin Parker proudly. "Fine, rosy-cheeked boys, Miss Perkins. As for my girls—there are only four now, Miss Perkins, for two died—but they are a-lookin' forward to givin' you a rousin' welcome up there in N' Hampshire, an' they don't mean to ever let you go away again—no! Come, get ready, Miss Perkins, we Taskers don't fergit kind deeds."

"Cousin Parker," said the prim maiden lady, standing up, "I believe you have the heart of an angel."

But he only looked down, coughed, and fumbled with his hat.

A STREET CAR ADVENTURE.

I.

PAUL CHALLINOR left the Jewells' box at the opera rather abruptly. Mrs. Bouden (Colonel Jewell's second daughter who married Dick Bouden, who died three years ago in Paris), over whose lovely shoulders he had been gazing at the last act of "Die Götterdämmerung," hardly turned her head to say to her sister, sitting next to her:

"Paul is getting positively rude. He was hardly civil when he went off—and has been joking about Wagner——"

"Oh!" exclaimed the sister, amid a louder clash of cymbals than ordinary.

"He kept talking about the 'fire-screen.' He said it gave him a hint for a Christmas present; and where do you suppose he has gone?"

"Did he say?"

"He said it was an engagement at the Club to play whist."

The sister smiled. There was a fine pianissimo passage, permitting the trombones and clarionets to regain their breath, and Mrs. Bouden said again:

"I think he is getting to be positively unbearable."

There were other ladies in the box who had been talking throughout the opera with the colonel, who sat back in a corner. They were talking now vigorously, and hardly modulated their voices during the pianissimo passage. They all seemed to be of that well-dressed, wealthy class who have reasons of their own for preferring loud, noisy operas. Mrs. Bouden seemed of another class. There was a delicacy in the poise of her head, a charming grace in her attitude. Her eyes betrayed the presence of an originally sweet nature that had had its

sadness and its suffering. She doubtless had her trials with Dick Bouden. She was spared brutality, for Dick even in his cups was always a gentleman. She was spared many years of his inebriety, for he had the considerateness to die within two years of their wedding day. But she had the gift of a fine pride, and she had, oddly, in her young innocence, idealized Dick. After his death she tried to idealize him again—he was a large handsome fellow—but her experience had hardened her a little. The edge had been taken off everything for her. Even Paul Challinor, whom everybody called "a good fellow," and "one of the best natured men in the world," affected her with a desire to say cynical things to him and of him. She thought she read most club men now. She thought she read *him*. He had been dangling about ever since she could remember. He dangled about even

before her engagement to Dick. He had gone abroad the very day of her wedding for some reason. He was very good and kind to Dick afterward during his illness in Paris. But he was equally good and kind to everyone, and she gave him no particular credit. Paul Challinor had the misfortune to have no background of selfishness for his good deeds. It is the sinner, who perpetrates occasional acts of charity, who wins the tearful admiration of ladies. With Paul, who had also the unfortunate jocular habit common to sensitive men who wish to conceal their real feeling, little acts of unselfishness were always a matter of course. He got no credit for them—he asked none. Mrs. Bouden said that the probability was he would turn out in the end to be an "amusing hypocrite." She pretended not to believe him when he said simply, "I'm going to the Club to play whist." Men

are easily "read," when you think the worst of them. Paul gave her reason. He often looked forlorn and rather bored of an afternoon. He often looked worse than Dick himself had ever done after a night of a very heavy dinner.

The fact was, the poor fellow fancied himself in love. He believed he had always been in love with beautiful Caroline Jewell. He remembered her when she first went into long dresses—it was not so many years ago. It was the year he went to college. He had sent her a beautiful bouquet of La France roses, and she had been good enough to give one of them back to him when he called. The faded rose had been treasured ever since in the leaves of a little Book of Common Prayer his mother had given him. It had happened to fall between the leaves of the Marriage Service. To the mind of Challinor this foolish little bit of sentiment had brought a singular

comfort. He was older now, yet he occasionally looked at the rose. It was very dry and thin and flat, yet it still retained its color, and a faint scent—very delicate yet perceptible—lingered still in its petals.

"He never goes anywhere now but to his Club," said Mrs. Bouden's sister. The orchestra was not at its noisiest now, and a magnificent woman in old Norse armor was chanting a long *récitatif* to an elderly figure, also in complete armor, who appeared to be somewhat bored.

"Oh, it's a great pity," sighed Mrs. Bouden, dropping her fan. "Paul should be made to *do* something. . . Men should all be made to do something."

Here a little overdressed lady leaned over to her from the next box, and asked in a screeching voice. "Isn't it time to go—of course you are bound to the Grantleys' dance? *We* are all going, and my husband is asleep now in the *entresol*, preparing for it!"

Colonel Jewell was bestirring himself, and the ladies with him were rising and calling for their wraps. So Mrs. Bouden nodded and rose, too, while some unmannerly people, just below them in the orchestra circle, turned about as if unreasonably angry, and appeared to be trying to stare them out of countenance, but with remarkably ill success. As they left the box, Mrs. Bouden said to her sister:

"At *least* he might have gone with us to the Grantleys'."

"Yes. It wouldn't have hurt him."

"He is so shy of late. Papa, wait! There, I have forgotten my slippers. We shall have to drive home, but it won't take long. I—I feel tired. I don't believe I will go to the dance. You can drop me and go on."

Her sister gazed a moment at her curiously, but said nothing.

II.

CHALLINOR found no one but old Burtsel at the Club, who implored him to play a few games of backgammon—five dollars up. Burtsel was a man who, he confessed it himself, should have died years ago. There was nothing left for him to do. His mission seemed to be *un fait accompli*. He had worked hard, earned a fortune, married off three daughters very well, had "buried" his wife, had retired from business, and now was alone again as at the outset of his life, when he first came to New York. He was more lonely, more solitary than at that youthful period. He haunted the Club, and played backgammon, and gossiped and told good stories, and listened delightedly to scandals, but that was about all he did. He had his old friends and cronies, but they were still busy men. Naturally, he often used to say he had outlived him-

self. He had a queer apologetic air always, as if ashamed of his idleness. Challinor used to say to him that he would enjoy himself much better in London; that New York was not a comfortable place to loaf in. Burtsel did run across to London for a season, but he returned drearier than before. Of late he had returned to the old habit of rising early and struggling for a seat on the Elevated, and appearing at his old office down town contemporaneously with the office boy. It had had its good effect. Burtsel, when Challinor sat down to play, seemed unusually cheerful.

"Ah, my boy," said he, "work is the only thing. We're put here to work on this footstool—and work we must or die. I go down town now every day again. I've got employment. I'm vice president of two insurance companies. I don't need the money, so I turn over my salary to charity. But God knows I am a

happier man. I work hard, too. You'd be happier if *you* did something, Challinor."

"Would I?" asked Paul dreamily, rattling his dice and throwing a two and a one.

"Certainly. This is an atmosphere of work, and those of us who wish to keep alive *must* work. It's nature. Sixes! I'm in luck. Yes, I made the mistake of thinking my daughters and my grandchildren would be interested in an old man like me. Sixes again! Jove! I'm going to win this game hands down."

"You ought to marry again," said Challinor absently, throwing a four and a one—he had no luck.

"I've thought of it, but somehow I don't know—*you and I are rather old hands to marry, Challinor.*"

"Humph!" laughed Challinor a little drearily. Burtsel was twenty-five years his senior. Probably Burtsel meant it as a joke, but it was a disagreeable joke at that!

"Perhaps I look at it from the wrong end. Every man who has *been* there does, I suppose. Marriage is merely 'worry' to me as I look back at it *now*. I look back on thirty years of it. Thirty years of it, my boy—all the sentiment, longing, love, of courtship, all the vicissitudes and amenities and occasional pleasures of married life smoothed down—stamped 'useless worry'—by thirty years of fact! Women never quite acknowledge it—men are honester. Take my advice—*continue* to be a bachelor! Ah, sixes again! Shall we play another game?"

Leavitt, an old faded beau and club gossip, Ellsworth and Jameson, younger, scrupulously dressed men, came, sat near them, smoked, and backed old Burtsel's game. He played very well, and had all the luck. Leavitt told of the latest club news. How Johnson had quarreled with Dixon at billiards and they didn't "speak."

He counted over half a dozen men in the Club who "cut" each other for some trivial offense. Jameson, a Southerner, regretted the absence of the duel in New York. Burtsel said it all reminded him of a parcel of old ladies quarreling over their teacups. Every now and then they were interrupted by the noisy laughter of a group of men who were drinking "Old Reserve" and seltzer in a corner.

Challinor rose, paid his debts to Burtsel, and walked out into the library. He had played and lost half a dozen games of backgammon, and it was time to stop. If Burtsel was right and marriage was simply "worry," why, club life was at all events a bore. There was less of despair in worry than in *ennui*. When he was a boy he used to be made to play backgammon with his aunt, and here he was at it again in *his* middle age. He shuddered. He took up the prettily printed Parisian *L'Illustration*. He fancied he

recognized Caroline Bouden's face peering at him in the portrait of a famous ballet dancer! Caroline Bouden! Would marriage with *her*—thirty years after, looked back upon from old Burtsel's age—come to be regarded merely as a "worry"? He took up several papers, but her charming oval face seemed continually to peer at him from between the leaves. He strode out into the hallway and down the marble staircase of the Club, his hands in his pockets. "*She doesn't know me,*" he insisted to himself. "I believe she doesn't *appreciate* me!" he added, reddening a little, "and it's my own fault!"

As if conscious of the grotesque self-conceit in his remark, Challinor, in a more humble frame of mind, slipped on his fur-lined ulster, desired a cab be called, and meditatively prepared to go home to bed.

III.

No cab could be had for some reason, and Challinor, suddenly realizing the lateness of the hour—it was now long after one—set out to catch a street car for his uptown journey. He waited for some moments on the corner of the Avenue, while the wind, catching up the fine pulverized dust of the pavement, blew it about him in a cloud which nearly obscured him. It was growing very cold, and the stars gleamed like flinty sparks in the heavens. He saw far down the avenue the red eye of the horse car as it grew toward him. He pulled his fur collar high about his ears, grasped his stick in his left hand, caught the handrail of the car as it passed, and leaped aboard. The conductor was an old grizzly haired Irishman with one eye, the left optic being obscured by a large square patch which he wore, and which,

as Challinor observed later, was attached for convenience' sake to the peak of his official cap. When for any reason he removed this, Challinor observed a large bony cavity in which, as if by way of variety, the conductor had inserted a glass agate of cerulean blue.

The car was comfortably full as Challinor entered, but he managed to get a seat in the right-hand front corner, and presently two rather gayly dressed ladies and two elderly gentlemen got out and he could spread out a little in his corner, and obtain, if he chose, a better view of the passengers. He delighted in horse cars —they were a thing of immoderate joy to him forever, because he was never tired of amusing himself with people's faces. He made stories as he rode, and gave the unsuspecting gentleman who sat by the little stove the *soubriquet* of Captain O'Trigger, in love with Elizabeth—a charming girl (somewhat agitated and

gazing out of the window of the car at frequent intervals) who sat next to and as he believed in charge of a fierce looking dragon, old Mrs. Sykes, from whose tyranny the handsome captain would doubtless eventually relieve her. At the other end of the car sat old Mr. Dombey, stiff and solemn, with little Paul at his side, very sleepy, and inclined to drop his pale little face against the soft maternal old shoulder of Mrs. Nickleby, next in order near the door. The row of solemn, wooden young gentleman with canes, he regarded with indifference, as being too immaculately dressed for heroes; and, if heroes, four of them in red neckties would certainly burlesque any decent plot! He fell to wondering whether Hamlet played in fours would be amusing. He tried to imagine a rank of Booths, a file of Salvinis playing to a choir of Desdemonas! As the car made its way up the Avenue, his ingenious characterization of the pas-

sengers fell to pieces. Little Paul got out with Mrs. Nickleby—*not* with his solemn father. The dragon left the car, indifferent to the fell designs of the fierce Captain O'Trigger upon the sweet Elizabeth, and presently, swearing at the conductor, the doughty captain himself got out alone—false-hearted knave—and indifferently left the fair young girl alone to her fate! The grizzly one-eyed conductor came in, counted up his fares, and went out, pulling the car door after him with a shrill screech and a slam. But still the sweet Elizabeth sat in her corner, a little less agitated now, and having pulled her veil down from her stylish, long-peaked hat. He idly studied *her*, because she alone was left to him out of all the *cast* of players, and he felt his ride was to resolve itself after all into a purely character sketch. Elizabeth had blue eyes—he recalled these fixed upon him shyly before she had pulled down her veil. She had

had, too, a good deal of color. He now observed that she was dressed elegantly, and wore long *gants de suède*. Her *démarche* delighted his artistic eye. He would have liked to paint her portrait as she sat there in the corner—the portrait of a charming young lady, in her gray winter furs. He looked down; he fancied he could catch a glimpse of a well turned little foot and ankle. Elizabeth *must* be her name—to his mind it went very well with the round, oval face, the light hair, the color, and the pretty hat.

IV.

His mind must for a moment have been occupied with other matters, or perhaps he was experiencing one of those periods of coma which Mark Twain describes—those blanks of consciousness which come and go in the brain—for the next moment he glanced at Elizabeth *she wasn't there!* Her corner was empty,

and he was conscious of a sensation of regret. But there was a lady, too tall he thought for Elizabeth, standing at the other end of the car, her back toward him, talking with the conductor. He could catch her words. He moved a little and listened. The rich abundance of her beautiful light hair was very much like Elizabeth's. Her hand just touched the car strap. Her hand charmed him.

"Then you *are* married—and *have* grown-up daughters?"

"Oi do be havin' three, miss. Two o' thim do be out at sarvice—and four byes, miss, as do be at school all day, miss; bad luck to 'em."

Challinor fancied he heard Elizabeth give a sigh of relief. She took her seat again, but this time near the stove. Her veil was up again. Challinor wondered if she were not an emotional thermometer, and only pulled her veil down when she rained tears, or lifted it when she smiled!

The car was nearing his street now, and he and Elizabeth were still the solitary occupants. Late as it was, he did not feel particularly sleepy. He did not wish to go home yet with his play quite unfinished—his *dénouement* prevented. He looked at his watch. It was nearly two. It occurred to him that Elizabeth's presence in the car at that hour *must* be satisfactorily accounted for. It would amuse him to remain and try and account for it.

That the one-eyed conductor was the unhappy father of three girls and four boys was a fact that had evidently given Elizabeth a peculiar satisfaction. Challinor concluded that she now probably looked upon the venerable official in the light of a chaperon—a defense possibly against himself, who, he regretfully saw, in Elizabeth's eyes, was possibly playing or to play the part in the play of designing villain! Elizabeth's veil was up, now, and her pretty blue eyes had rested upon

him furtively, and then glanced to one of the amusing advertisements put up to divert weary Americans from too serious contemplation in horse cars. Instinctively perceiving that she desired to scrutinize his outward appearance, and but too well aware that at her age she would probably "size him up" as at least a villain ten years older than he really was, Challinor heroically closed his eyes and appeared to fall into a deep slumber. When he opened them again, the conductor—whom he dubbed for some reason "The O'Shaughnessy"—had entered the car and continued the conversation where she had dropped it, with Elizabeth.

"Two childer over on Long Islan' besides, miss, one dead o' the fever in de hate a long four years back. But it's me life is hard, miss; bein' out all night, an' in all day, a-thryin' ter git a leetle slape, an me byes a-jumpin' and howlin' about me bid, the day, an' th' ole woman she

washes, miss; an it's har-r-r-rud fer me tho' I hev ter close but wan eye fer to git any slape at all at all—an' me an' me car runs all night long ivery night—Harlem to the Cittyall. We kape a-movin' through all the hours—a-changin' hosses twice, an' drivers once. But I rides on till sunup, Cittyall till Harlem, miss, an' shure it's not much pleasure I have, niver seein' the strates be daylight. It's not many as talks like you, an spakes a fair wor-r-rud like a lady, as you *be's*, miss, with the condu'ther. They mostly crosses me."

Elizabeth drew back just a little. Challinor saw that the old conductor presumed a little too much on his fatherly ways, his five children, his capacity of chaperon.

"She *may* appeal to me," he thought. "At least she may begin to believe that I am the *preferable* villain of her comedy."

"It's a har-r-rud life, miss, an' a kind

word as you spake lightens me worruk. Are yez going home, miss?"

"N-no." Elizabeth drew in her breath as she spoke, and closed her pretty lips. Challinor preserved a discreet indifference. He really felt alarmed for Elizabeth!

"It's late, miss, beggin' yer pardin', an', an', an'—be ye not goin' home, thin?"

The O'Shaughnessy cocked his head on one side, presumably to hear the better; and, as he did so, pushed his official cap back on his head, disclosing his awful agate eye of cerulean blue.

Evidently this was too much for Elizabeth! She gave a little frightened scream, and flew across, unexpectedly, to Challinor's side.

"Why, miss!" exclaimed the old conductor, astonished. But Challinor frowned at him heroically, and The O'Shaughnessy, bewildered—he had only spoken to her out of sheer loneliness and

goodness of heart—retired with his one eye to the rear platform, disconsolate, and shut the door.

Elizabeth fluttered down by Challinor's side like some frightened bird.

On this closer acquaintance, Challinor observed that the young girl was treating her situation as purest tragedy and not as a comedy at all!

Her veil was wet with tears. Her handkerchief, trimmed with delicate and expensive lace, was drenched. He said nothing at first, waiting for her to speak. He divined that she would prefer to speak first, after she had recovered a little. Presently his silence did seem to reassure Elizabeth, for she said:

"How f-far is it, sir, to Harlem?"

Awaiting a suitable pause, he said:

"I fancy we are nearly there."

"Th-then, how far is it to the City Hall?"

"Seven miles, I believe."

His face *looked* his concern for her. She glanced at him. She studied his pale, sensitive features, noticed his low drooping mustache, beneath it a kindly smile. He realized her appreciation of his advanced years not only by her use of the word "sir," but by what she then ventured. "It must seem very queer to you, sir——" He set her quite at her ease by replying, in quite an old gentleman's manner—Challinor always took the old men's parts in private theatricals, and took them very well—"Er, at my time of life, my dear young lady, nothing ever seems very queer, don't you know."

"It is very late, it is nearly two," and she looked at a tiny jeweled watch.

"It is never late in New York," he replied, in his best fatherly manner. "It may seem late to those who reside in the country, but you would be surprised to know how many are up at this hour. Er-er—it's *my* favorite hour for riding."

Challinor went on to talk of the newspapers, and of the market men, who sat up all night. Before he had finished, she even dared to interrupt him. He had completely reassured Elizabeth! Indeed, she almost smiled, a brief, timid little smile, as she said.

"I'm not on a newspaper, sir, nor—nor connected with a market."

Challinor expressed a slight natural surprise. He inwardly flattered himself that he was doing a good act, and doing it cleverly. He would take the kindest care of Elizabeth, and restore her to her friends. It was exactly the sort of adventure the fastidious young man delighted in. "Ah," he laughed inwardly, "see how deftly I will gain her confidence, this sweet girl! how I will find out her secret! I will lead her back. She's too young for a tragedy. She's a willful creature. This is an *escapade.* I will take her back to her friends."

"When I *do* get to Harlem, I don't mean to get out, I mean to stay in the car," she said.

Challinor nodded. "Yes," he said, "that's exactly what I expect to do—and what I often do."

"You?" she opened her blue eyes very wide.

"Why, yes. I'm troubled with insomnia; I presume it's my *advancing years.* Now, this jolting car is just the best thing for me."

He was conscious that he had ventured rather far. She drew away from him a little as if doubtful. Then, after a pause she asked, as if from a sense of duty, solemnly:

"Have *you* any grown-up daughters?"

Her question came on him suddenly, and he couldn't help it, his cleverness flew to the winds, he burst out into a shout of laughter.

"*Har-lem—change keers,* now!" called

out The O'Shaughnessy, opening the door. But as neither of his passengers moved, he added confidentially, "We be's afther startin' back in tin minutes"—and fell to stirring up the hot coals of the little stove.

V.

The ten minutes of waiting at Harlem, Challinor improved by trying to account, gravely, for his sudden laughter. He shifted his ground once or twice, and Elizabeth owed all her growing trust in him not to his "cleverness," but to his frank honesty of face. His fine dark eyes beamed with a kindly spiritual grace,—she felt their benediction. He noticed that she drew near him, as some rough-looking men got in and took seats opposite. It was not long after the car started again they exchanged names. A little later came her story, little by little, in which she found that Challinor sympathized. She grew more explicit. She seemed to

be always looking for a rebuke, and to be surprised that none came. She was a truant. She had defied a tyrant schoolmistress—none other than Mlle. Clarence of — West Fifty —— Street. *She was a runaway!*

That this dreadful announcement had but little effect upon Challinor, surprised her. We need not betray "Elizabeth's" real name to a less sympathetic public. He became rather grave, and assumed a still more venerable appearance, if possible.

"Mam'selle should not speak to *her* as if she were a common servant!"

Still Challinor merely nodded his head. "I left in a rage . . . Mlle. Clarence, too, was in a perfect fury. She said, 'To-morrow, Mees, I shall send you home to your parents.' Do you think I would wait to be *sent* home? Ah, Mr. Challinor, you do not know my father. He is very stern . . . sometimes he is even harsh to my poor mamma. He is a judge, Mr. Challinor,

and sometimes I think it's being a judge makes him so stern. But I think I could even face *him* rather than Mam'selle! He would not wish his daughter to submit to insult . . ."

Challinor said nothing and she continued: "You ought to see my home, Mr. Challinor—it is an old stone mansion in the midst of a great park—and before the door is a long avenue of elms. We have fine riding horses—we have many dogs. I would like you very much to see my home, Mr. Challinor. I would like you to see it in the spring time. Do you ride, sir? I would take you on some glorious rides. There is the path over the mountain by the glen. And from the mountain one can see Utica, and Palmyra, and Syracuse, and Rome, and almost to Ilium, and half the beautiful Mohawk valley, and the little villages of Cyprus and Cairo—on a clear day one can see the little white steeple of Nineveh."

"I—I imagined these classic towns to be in ruins," he laughed irreverently.

"Oh, Mr. Challinor, you don't know your New York State!" and Elizabeth appeared to blush for him.

"At all events the names are better than Canajoharie or Skaneateles," he added.

"I loathe and despise Indian names," she said, and she went on to enumerate a list of them for his edification.

"But, your plans?" he asked, interrupting.

"I mean to wait till morning and take a train."

"Ah . . . You will not return at once to school?"

"It is very pleasant in a street car . . . It is pleasanter than I thought. I do not mind it, Mr. Challinor—with you."

Mr. Challinor said nothing. He pretended to study the advertisements in the car attentively.

"And do you know, I tried ever so

many hotels and they would not take me? they said they were full. Each one said the same thing."

Challinor was well aware of this peculiar barbarity to young women on part of the city hostelries and said nothing.

"And so I was at my wits' end, Mr. Challinor. I did not know what I *should* do. But isn't this car comfortable,—for a car?"

Challinor subdued a slight yawn, and admitted that it *was*—very unusually comfortable—for a car!

"I intended to go back, late as it was, to Mam'selle. So I boarded the car, but, but——"

Elizabeth gazed abstractedly at the advertisements also.

"It was so very agreeable, I suppose?"

"No. But it—was *you* who prevented me getting off at Fifty——th street!"

"I?" Challinor was now startled out of his assumed indifference. Had *he* led

her to Harlem? Would it be left to him, in the final act of the little comedy, to play Scapegoat to Mam'selle's Retribution?

"Yes, you. *I knew I could trust you*—you are so—so—old. So I just stuck to the car!"

She smiled at him so pleasantly that he took off his hat and bowed, realizing that she had complimented him; and she added softly, half to herself, with a delicate, sweet little side-glance of approval:

"You are a gentleman!"

VI.

Mrs. Bouden had the advantage of her sister in refusing the Grantleys' ball. She rose early, fresh and bright with the morning air, and was able to pour the coffee and make herself generally agreeable to her father, the colonel, who was accustomed, when Caroline was not at home, to breakfast alone. Colonel Jewell

"abominated" these solitary breakfasts, he said; and indeed they were rather gloomy affairs in company with his paper and the solemn serving man—but his wife and daughter pleaded previous nights of social wakefulness as an excuse. Colonel Jewell used to growl a good deal over it, because, as he said, *he* himself frequently mingled in these social functions, and managed to keep well awake, too—yet *he* never had experienced any difficulty in rising as early as he liked. *He* knew fathers of families who were very strict in these matters, and every son and daughter—no matter if they had danced all night—were obliged to be prompt at the breakfast table. "It was a rule he would like to see adopted in *his* house, by thunder!"

On the morning in question, Caroline found her father in rare good humor. She went to him in her warm white morning gown with its pretty ribbons, and

stole her arm about his huge neck for a kiss. Then she smoothed out his napkin for him, and he muttered, "You're a good girl, Carry. But *you're* too good to last long at home. I see Challinor is after you still—well, take him. He's a pretty decent fellow, and he has a very pretty bank account at Ball & Pry's."

Mrs. Bouden made a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, nonsense, papa! we won't talk of Mr. Challinor just yet. And then his moral character——"

The colonel looked up from his chop.

"What do you know of his moral character?"

"That's it—what do I?"

"Women shouldn't meddle with such things," he said severely.

"Oh, shouldn't they!" And there was a little silence.

"I know, Carry; Dick turned out badly." Father and daugher had had

many frank confidences about the catastrophe of Dick Bouden. "But, generally speaking, men's morals should be left alone. We're all poor, weak, sinning, erring devils. Be charitable. Now, Paul Challinor sets up to be a great stickler for morals." Mrs. Bouden said nothing, and he went on:

"He's got the reputation of being a 'good fellow,' too, which is better than being moral—better as men go. I think we have a prejudice, we men who live in the world, against too *stiff* morals. I think it is this way: a man can *say* pretty much anything if he lives decently. Take the Club. Do you know, Carry, I'm all the time finding out little acts of surprising kindness and goodness on the part of men whom I had believed very hardened sinners. What do you think old Burtsel does every New Year's? Sneaks off like a coward down to the East side, and gives a turkey dinner to some blind children!

Yet old Burtsel can—well, he can drink like a whale! They say he gives his salary to charity. He's gone into business again, you know. Who ever thinks of Burt except as a hard, tight-fisted old grumbling curmudgeon! Ah, Carry! even Dick had his good points; and who can tell how much *his* love of high living was not inherited from his father, who drank us all under the table? *Be charitable!* I like Paul—Paul and I have had many a long talk. He's always civil to us old fellows. Now, what if he is—not perfect? Who *is* perfect?" Her father jerked out his words, as he ate, and she sat silently watching him.

"You would like me to marry Paul Challinor. You know you would!" And she looked rebukingly at her father.

"I haven't said so."

"But you *would*."

"Isn't he what I say?" And he laughed a little.

"Oh, I don't know. I—I wish we New York girls weren't so *au courant* with the world's ways. Lots of things have long since ceased to shock us. We know too much. I wish I had always lived in the country somewhere. I like to have illusions. Now, I fear, there are none left for me."

Then, to her father's surprise, Mrs. Bouden broke completely down; and, with her head bowed upon her hands on the back of her chair, she sobbed.

"It isn't because I have married. I know some married people who somehow have these sweet illusions still. Marriage seems to have raised them up, to have ennobled them."

"My poor girl, my poor Carry!" muttered the old colonel, rather savagely, too, as he thought of Dick Bouden.

"But with me—I—I feel so very old. I am young yet, but I look back on—so much! It all seems so cruel—the world

so much worse than our dreams. And I'm not thinking of myself so much, either. Such crushing unkindness and despair is reserved for many young innocent wives. Oh, I can't express myself; but *you* know, papa, marriage is so often a trap from which they can't get out. I know of many girls who have gone in laughing, thoughtless, happy, innocent—a little time and they are old women—a day, a week. All the sweetness of youth is somehow stamped out, dead. Their husbands reveal nothing but what seems to them horrible wickedness—men of the world wickedness. Should they teach young girls more, or less? Could *you* bear to have *your* daughters taught to look lightly on these things? to laugh at them, to regard marriage as lightly as the French? . . . Then, let me say, do as the French gentleman proverbially does, *preserve, at least, the illusions.* But, as it seems, American gentleman are more

frank. They are too frank. They will not suffer us to retain our beliefs in them."

A great deal of what she was saying was lost on Mrs. Bouden's father; who, perhaps, had heard some of it before, and who was, to tell the truth, somewhat anxious that day about the stock market. He rose from the table, newspaper in hand, and patted his daughter on the shoulder. "Never mind, Carry," he said very kindly. "If you will only stay and live with your old father, it will make him very glad. You've been a good girl to him, and you are a woman now. The world's wicked, but the world's damn good, too—I didn't mean to swear, Carry, but it's this way: *I'm* finding out that men are better than I suspected all the time. Fact! It comes late in life that you perceive this, when you have time to understand men's motives. You think everyone is bad now. In twenty years you will, I take my oath, *get back your illusions!*"

His daughter shook her head sadly,

Colonel Jewell laughed and kissed the fair young woman at his side more gently than was his wont, and went out, and so down town to his affairs, humming all the way a tune. I think it had a faint resemblance to Mendelssohn's "Wedding March"!

VII.

CAROLINE BOUDEN made her way into the richly furnished drawing room and sat down at the piano. Her deft fingers ran along the white keys, and found themselves dreamily executing a slumber *lied* of Schumann's. "O Paul, Paul!" she murmured to herself. "If I only believed in *you!*"

Presently the bell rang, and a card was brought in. What could Mr. Challinor mean by calling so early in the morning? It was very strange!

She went into the reception room to meet him, just as she was, in her long

white belaced and beribboned morning gown. Her dark hair hung low, in the fashion of the day, on her white neck, and she had to him, as she pushed aside the *portière*, a charmingly *intimate* air which he had never remarked before. She gave him her hand with a question, and the question and intimate manner froze into ice at his appearance in evening dress, and at the apparition of *Elizabeth!*

It may be confessed that it was a very tired and yawning Elizabeth—an Elizabeth, rather pale now, and as if wholly repentant, and full of regret for her night-long *escapade*. She rose diffidently, as Mrs. Bouden stood staring at her, and then at Challinor, for explanation. Who could this white primrose be, with the patrician face!—this fair young girl with the pretty hands—who was she? What could Paul want? Her face became a study of interrogation.

As the gray dawn advanced along the city streets that day from the east, and brought with it the shrill early whistles of the factories, and later as the vast, silent, workaday throng made its way to toil, and a few cleanly sad-faced shop girls happened to get on to car No. 1313, a picture was presented to them which produced more than one audible smile.

A young man—pale and handsome, with drooping mustache—was seated near the stove, bolt upright; leaning against his shoulder sat a fair young girl, sound asleep. The young man nodded every now and then, and his eyes were partly closed. Still *he* was not asleep. Presently he sat up, very much awake, and stared with a strange fixity of purpose at an advertisement of a new kind of umbrella opposite. Paul Challinor was suddenly aware that it was after 7 A. M., and that he had taken a large contract, as the saying is, on his hands. He was

well aware that every step he now took was on delicate ground. Here was a great opportunity for his cleverness—but he didn't feel in the least clever now—he felt worn out and tired, and that he was unequal to cope with the situation. It seemed very clear to him that Elizabeth could not be allowed to go home now—and yet, how could she go back to school? All through the long hours of the jolting car, the getting on and off of "toughs," the screeching and bang of the door, he had meditated and planned what he should do—and yet he was still utterly at sea. To Challinor's credit be it said he never once contemplated giving Elizabeth a few cold words of advice and then deserting her on a street corner! His tender conscience carried, through all the hours, the full weight of her words, "*I knew I could trust you—you are so old—so I just stuck to the car!*" He had felt very old indeed that morning as they

stepped at last from the car, and he slipped a five dollar bill into the old conductor's hand, and whispered to him, "*I shall see her home.*"

They went to an unfashionable restaurant and enjoyed a long, tedious, and sleepy breakfast among yawning waiters, Elizabeth protesting that she could not eat a thing, crying much, and, to Challinor's surprise, falling to, later, and devouring with a splendid appetite half a chicken and half a dozen rolls and coffee! Exactly what he should do with Elizabeth at the close of their breakfast, he had not determined. The girl, now that her appetite had been satisfied, added to his difficulty by declaring that "she would not—*no*, wild horses should not drag her back to face that awful Mlle. Clarence!" And then she looked at poor Challinor so beseechingly that he had not the heart to tell her that he thought this must eventually be done. Instinctively

he knew that *he* could not take her back. A plausible tale, forsooth, *he* would be able to tell that "tyrant of girls, that foe of all *man* kind, Mam'selle"—that they had been traversing the length of the great city all night in a common street car! He wondered *now* why he had not taken Elizabeth back at once, no matter at what hour of the night! He searched his heart relentlessly to fathom the reason of his doing exactly what he had done. He could give none. Yet he admitted to himself in a vague way the charm of her youth and beauty; and he knew that her innocence had called on him for protection, and so far had received it as from a man of honor.

He then began to feel a reacting pride, a vainglory in what he had done. He felt that his friends would approve of it, would credit him with a certain Quixotic self-sacrifice. Ah, but would they, if they knew how charming was Elizabeth?

What, then, would Caroline Bouden say? He fairly stopped short, when the probable misreport of the little harmless *escapade*, with its horrible details—magnified into a vulgar flirtation in a public street car—would reach her delicate ears! What would *she* say? Ah, he knew her very well. He knew what she would say! As if to accentuate his despair, and hasten the fulfillment of his catastrophe with Mrs. Bouden, Leavitt met them as they turned into the Avenue, and stared at Elizabeth, with a curious half smile. Now, Leavitt would not hesitate, he knew, to do him an ill turn with Mrs. Bouden, and after Leavitt had heard the whole story, *he* would have his own comments, too, to add at the Club, and elsewhere. To add to his mortification, Challinor suddenly realized with a hollow despair that he was still in his evening dress in broad daylight! He seized the arm of Elizabeth with a frantic effort. "Come,

let us hasten *on*," he cried vaguely. "Let us at least hide ourselves in the mazes of Central Park and talk it over."

As the park was not far away, and as Elizabeth confessed to having never seen it, she went forward with poor Challinor rapidly. The color came back to her cheeks with the brisk exercise. It was a cool, delicious morning on the Avenue, and, to Challinor's despair, they seemed to meet at that early hour almost everyone he knew in New York. Finally, who should turn the corner but Colonel Jewell himself! After that, Challinor met with the sudden inspiration to go at once to Caroline Bouden with Elizabeth and their story! There was nothing else to do. "At least," he said to himself, "she shall hear from my own lips why I am here, as I am; in my evening clothes and what I have done—as for the opinion of anyone else, I care not the snap of my finger!"

Elizabeth made but slight protest at the deviation from the direction of Central Park. She was now a little wearied with the walk, and as Challinor explained to her that Mrs. Bouden was a kind, benevolent lady of his acquaintance, who would certainly not upbraid her for what she had done, she allowed herself to be led not unwillingly up the broad stoop of the Jewell mansion. It was one delicious thing about Elizabeth, as it seemed to him—her perfect trust in him, and her obedience.

When, in the reception room, Mrs. Bouden turned to him for an explanation, Challinor said lightly, as if it was an everyday affair, "I've brought you, Mrs. Bouden, a runaway——" Then he tried to laugh a little, but the laugh died away in a futile attempt at a smile.

"You've been to some ball?" she asked coldly and cruelly, eying first one culprit and then the other.

"We have been riding in a street car," he said lamely.

Mrs. Bouden stared at him, and he saw that across her face flashed painful memories of her inebriate husband and his "explanations."

"Why have you come to me, Mr. Challinor?" Her voice had an icy ring which curdled the very blood in his veins.

"I—I thought you might help us."

"Do you need help?"

"This young girl——" he gasped.

"I recommend you to take her home to her parents at once."

"She lives out of the city."

"I wish you a pleasant journey"— Mrs. Bouden bowed, and retreated. She was about to withdraw! On poor Challinor's pale forehead were standing beads of cold perspiration. He turned helplessly to Elizabeth. She came forward, with a gesture of calm assurance.

"Mrs. Bouden—madam—please listen to me, will you not? I—I have been perfectly horrid—I ran away from school. I am sorry—I did not know where to go. I was alone, I entered a street car. Mr. Challinor—— "

"Oh pray, do not prolong this very unpleasant interview with an explanation which will be humiliating to you both." Mrs. Bouden's hand was in the *portière.*

Elizabeth flushed angrily. "I make no explanations!" she cried, with a proud toss of her head. "But I will not allow you or anyone to misjudge this noble, good gentleman. Listen—you *shall* listen. It was my fault, *I* spoke to him. *I* threw myself on his protection. Yes, and he has treated me just as my own father would do."

Challinor had a fleeting wish that Elizabeth had used the word "brother," but he said nothing.

"I am at Mlle. Clarence's boarding-

school. It is on Fifty—— Street. I was angry—we had a scene, Mam'selle and I—I ran away—yes, I am very sorry now. But whatever I did, shall not bring harm to Mr. Challinor. *You* do not know him as I do!"

"My dear young lady, I have known Mr. Challinor since childhood."

"*Ah, but you don't know him!*" cried Elizabeth vehemently.

Mrs. Bouden actually turned to Challinor, putting out her hand helplessly, inquiringly.

"If you did, *could* you believe any wrong of him? See what he has done for me, a perfect stranger! But I am going. No, don't stop me, Mr. Challinor, I have brought this all on myself. I'm not going to hurt *you*. I have money, but I'm not going back to the school."

"Good God! where will you go?" asked Challinor, barring her way. "Mrs. Bouden—Caroline!"

He looked at her mutely. He could hear the little ormolu clock ticking away on the richly carved mantel—could see the sunlight pouring through the curtains of expensive lace. He saw Caroline Bouden wring her hands flashing with their jewels, and heard her say with a short half sigh, her eyes suddenly full of tears :

"Paul, I fear it's true—I never *have* known you! Forgive me! Forgive me!"

A moment later, and she had taken Elizabeth in her arms.

VIII.

Mrs. Bouden, in her efforts at reparation for the wrong she had done to poor Challinor, went to the extent of fibbing a little to the distracted Mlle. Clarence, who, fortunately, had not yet telegraphed to Elizabeth's home near Utica. She took the young girl back to

school that morning in her stylish *coupé*, and her two stately cobs, with their jingling silver harness, never looked more imposing, nor her footman more magnificent, than when they drew up before the brownstone high stoop of Elizabeth's fashionable boarding school. Mrs. Bouden was well known to Mlle. Clarence as a great lady in society. Her little fib about knowing Elizabeth's family so well, and her apologies for keeping her overnight without letting Mam'selle know, were taken in good part. "It was an oversight of one of the servants," said Mrs. Bouden frankly. "They are very trying, you know. But I am sure if there was any fault at all, it was not Elizabeth's, and I hope she may be allowed to come to see me, often. Do you know, I have taken the greatest fancy to her?"

When, early in the following June, Challinor's wedding—a quiet house affair

—took place, there were no bridesmaids. Yet near Challinor, as he stood, was a beautiful young girl dressed in one of those white dainty half lace affairs which bear so plainly the stamp of Paris. It was rather a jolly wedding—no one cried. But yet, as she stood with a sweet half confiding air near Challinor, there was a suspicious moisture in her blue eyes—not tears, for she had come to wish her friend no greater happiness than to be the husband of Caroline Bouden. Still—one may pardon a little emotion in a young schoolgirl—there was a suspicious little sigh that came, then, from the pretty lips of Elizabeth! She had come to be a good girl now, and under the influence of her new friends she rarely differed with the petulant old mam'selle.

Old Burtsel, who was at the wedding, said afterward at the Club, talking of the affair: "There was a young girl there—a very dainty, exquisite creature. She—

a mere child, I dare say in years—but somehow, confound it!—she made me instantly alter my whole views of marriage. With *her* now, I think, if I were a young fool, there wouldn't be much 'worry'! I'd marry her and *see*, anyway!"

THE END.